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Mistakes and Fatal Miscalculations in Cicero's Political Career

**From his consulship in 63 B.C. to the Philippics
in 44-43 B.C.**

by

Alicia S. Silver

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Marcus Tullius Cicero was a pivotal character in the transitional period from the end of the Roman Republic to the beginning of what was to become the Roman Empire. His contribution to our modern knowledge of Roman history, mores, judicial practices, the daily lives of the patrician class and more is invaluable. More than any other Roman, he left us with a breathing account of life in his times, through his correspondence with friends, family and associates, his many political and philosophical doctrines and, of course, his speeches in the Senate and trial courts of Rome. Cicero was brilliant, clever and funny and, yet, prone to uncontrollable ego and shockingly bad political choices and decisions. These political errors are crucial to Cicero's ultimate decision to return to active political life and leadership in 44 B.C. after the assassination of Julius Caesar, including the delivery of fourteen extant Philippics against Marcus Antonius, a decision which led to his own execution. This paper examines the behavior and actions of a man who only wanted to recapture the earlier glory of his consular year, 63 B.C., but who inevitably seemed to always take the wrong course.

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On March 15, 44 B.C.,¹ Julius Caesar was assassinated. A nominal Republic, shaken for years by challenges to its rules and laws, was once again thrown into turmoil. Rome's future was at stake and no one knew how to respond: not the Senate, nor its consul, nor the conspirators nor the Roman people. In the immediate aftermath of the murder, Rome was paralyzed. In 44, Marcus Antonius was Caesar's co-consul and, therefore, his obvious successor and remaining leading citizen. Since he was not a participant in the plot, he had been detained outside the Senate while the deed was taking place. As soon as he realized what had occurred, unsure of his own fate, he immediately fled rather than seize the reins in the resultant furor. Instead of declaring themselves saviors of the Republic and alleviating fear, the assassins, Caesar's fellow senators, many of whom had been his lifelong friends, also fled. Panic and pandemonium ensued. From that moment on, Rome (or at least those who upheld the old constitution) fought for her life, naively trying to defend and preserve an ideal form of government that had virtually disappeared. Finally, the formation of the Second Triumvirate in 43 was the veritable death knell for restoring the Republic that had once existed.

Once calm had been restored, amnesty granted, and compromise reached, for approximately two months following Caesar's death, Antonius seemed to be acting moderately towards the assassins and showing deference to the Senate. He proposed that Caesar's *acta* be approved, that the assassins go unpunished, but not praised, that Dolabella be appointed co-consul in accordance with Caesar's wishes, and that an atmosphere of compromise prevail. Frisch believes that this policy placed Antonius in a

¹ Hereafter, all dates are B.C. unless otherwise noted.

position of almost absolute power which, in the opinion of many of his countrymen, he abused². Antonius' subsequent behavior became the ultimate provocation for the fourteen extant speeches that are known as Marcus Tullius Cicero's *Philippics*, a nickname based on Demosthenes' speeches against Philip of Macedon.

This thesis will examine Cicero's motivation, in 44-43, for undertaking the leadership role that ultimately led to his execution. It will investigate his escalating hatred and vitriol for Marcus Antonius, his strong allegiance to and promotion of Octavian, and his decision to re-enter active political life, in effect, to take the helm of the slowly sinking ship that was the Roman Republic in 44-43. The questions posed here are whether Cicero's behavior was courageous and selfless, without regard for his own life, believing that he could restore the Republic for the people of Rome or whether he had personal and ulterior motives for inciting a civil war. Another issue is whether Cicero continued to act rationally as the situation escalated or whether his ability to see things clearly was affected by his knowledge that he had undertaken a lost cause.

CICERO: BRIEF BACKGROUND WITH REFERENCE TO PHILIPPICS

Cicero, who had been consul in 63 B.C., had not held a real position of influence at Rome for almost twenty years. Nevertheless, he remained involved and interested in activities in public life. At first he applauded the policy of compromise, singing its praises in terms like *amnestia* and *oblivia sempiterna*. Frisch believes that in the days directly after the murder, Cicero even considered collaborating with Antonius, although

² Hartvig Frisch, *Cicero's Fight for the Republic: The Historical Background of Cicero's Philippics* (Copenhagen: Glydendal, 1946) 56.

he does not indicate what form that collaboration would take.³ However, by April, Cicero had become angrily disappointed with the conspirators' behavior and was lamenting the fact that Rome was under the control of Antonius and Dolabella, the consuls chosen by Caesar, not the people.⁴ He had become aware of Antonius' questionable and, to Cicero, illegal actions in both Rome and the provinces. He vacillated for months as to whether or not he should return to Rome, knowing that when he did, he would be taking on Antonius.⁵ He ultimately decided that his place was in the Senate, and returning to Rome on August 31, 44, within weeks assumed a position of leadership such as he had not held since the days of his consulship.⁶

Posterity is fortunate that Cicero was a prolific writer and much of what he wrote in that crucial period remains. However, his words, actions and decisions during the period after Caesar's death are open to interpretation and debate. Dickinson states that Cicero was not moved by a desire for power or money.⁷ Shackleton-Bailey says that no one will ever know "after what private hesitations Cicero set foot on the fatal ladder."⁸ He believes that Cicero, aware of the risk and exhibiting great courage, may have had an urge for "primacy...not like Caesar or Pompey, but as he had said, 'equality in freedom, primacy in esteem.'"⁹ Mitchell insists that Cicero was not seeking a leadership role in a restored Republic because he knew he was too old. He would content himself with the prestige that came with his consular status since he really had no strategy for

³ Frisch 119.

⁴ *Att.* 14.6.2, 14.9.2 and 14.10.1.

⁵ Frisch 122.

⁶ Frisch 126.

⁷ John Dickinson, *Death of a Republic: Political Thought at Rome 59-44 B.C.* (New York: Macmillan, 1963) 44.

⁸ D.R. Shackleton Bailey, *Cicero* (New York: Scribner, 1971) 246-249.

⁹ Shackleton Bailey 246-249.

saving the Republic nor any actions he could suggest to the conspirators.¹⁰ Frisch concurs, stating that Cicero's willingness to become the leader of the Republican opposition in the Senate exhibited his courage to lead the fight to save liberty, even if it was at personal expense.¹¹

It would appear, therefore, that Cicero's ostensible motivation was to rescue and restore the Republic. Everitt emphasizes that Cicero was the right man for the job. He was one of the few senior statesmen who had survived recent political turmoil, therefore representing "the best of the past."¹²

He was known for advocating peace and reconciliation throughout his career. He also possessed the expertise, both administrative and rhetorical, to regain his old political influence. Everitt alludes to a personality shift that exhibited a new "ruthlessness and clarity" which could have been due to his advanced age and an attitude of having nothing to lose. Everitt also suggests that Cicero's years spent reading and writing philosophy might have helped him clarify his priorities. Therefore, the Cicero who returned to politics was in effect a new person who was now willing to use "unscrupulous and even unconstitutional methods" to achieve his goal: "the full, complete and permanent restoration of the Republic."¹³

Syme, no partisan of Cicero's, provides a fresh perspective on Cicero and his attacks on Marcus Antonius. He believes that historians rely too much on the *Philippics*, and that the lens should be adjusted without their influence.¹⁴ In Syme's opinion,

¹⁰ Thomas N. Mitchell, *Cicero, the Senior Statesman* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1991) 299.

¹¹ Frisch 9.

¹² Anthony Everitt, *Cicero: The Life and Times of Rome's Greatest Politician* (New York: Random House, 2001) 287.

¹³ Everitt 287.

¹⁴ Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (London: Oxford UP, 1951) 105.

Cicero's last year, although "full of glory and eloquence", was a disaster for Rome.¹⁵ To Syme, Cicero's political judgment was frequently questionable.¹⁶ Syme's criticism of Cicero and his motives is damning. He accuses him of exhibiting a fanaticism upon his return to Rome in 44 that could only have been a result of the memory of past "humiliations": his exile, the role he was forced to play during the First Triumvirate as a puppet of the despots, and later Caesar, defending people he despised, his miscalculation in siding with Pompey during the civil war; and, finally, according to Syme, "the guilty knowledge of his own inadequacy." Syme accuses Cicero, although greatly talented, of having done much less for the Republic during his career than his speeches professed. Cicero also knew that he should never have left Rome after March 17, when his talents might truly have served to bring about "concord and ordered government."¹⁷ Instead, he deserted Rome, vacillating about what to do, as was his wont. Syme states that by the time he returned in the autumn, it was too late. When he finally decided to join the fray, he incited what Syme calls "the most irrational of all civil wars," instead of working towards some kind of peace.¹⁸

There is no question that the *Philippics* exhibit a continuous escalation in Cicero's anger and hatred towards Marcus Antonius and a certain increased fanaticism in his style. There is an almost manic tone in some of the *Philippics*, and Frisch believes that Cicero was a "manio-depressive <sic>" character.¹⁹ Therefore, it is essential to investigate how Cicero came to be on his second threshold of greatness in

¹⁵ Syme 4.

¹⁶ Syme 142.

¹⁷ Syme 144.

¹⁸ Syme 139.

¹⁹ Frisch 15.

44. The clues lie in the career that created the man who, at the age of 63, was willing to take on this dangerous challenge.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND/POLITICAL ERRORS?

CICERO'S CONSULSHIP AND CATILINE

. Cicero was born in Arpinum in 106. He was an *eques*, a *novus homo*, not born to the aristocracy and, therefore, his rise to power at Rome in his early career took extra effort and cleverness since he could never be accepted as one of the true *optimates*, the properly born ruling class. Nonetheless, he ran through the *cursus honorum* and ultimately became consul in 63.²⁰ From that point on, his political career is fraught with indecisive and questionable choices, several of which seem to have been reached because he put his ego before common sense; others because, although extremely bright and clever, he did not possess the savvy and innate ruthlessness of a true politician. It has been suggested that, had he been born in another era, Cicero would have lived his life in an ivory tower outside the political arena, reading, writing and teaching philosophy and law.²¹ However, this was not a possibility in Cicero's lifetime and the route that he traveled, although more arduous for an *eques*, was the expected course in order to achieve success. His own philosophy speaks of the ideal statesman and his responsibilities to the people and the state. Nonetheless, there appears to have been a certain naivete in Cicero's thinking, probably because he believed in the innate goodness of man.²²

²⁰ Elizabeth Rawson, *Cicero: A Portrait* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1983) 61.

²¹ Frisch 15.

²² Dickinson 46.

Cicero's consulship became famous for his very successful suppression of the Catilinarian conspiracy. The decision that came back to haunt him throughout the rest of his life was having the conspirators executed without trial, a unilateral power inherent in the *Senatus consultum ultimum*. Cicero considered his actions during his consulship as the greatest achievement of his career and they were celebrated by all, giving him the title *pater patriae* for having saved his country. However, several years later he paid for that decision with exile and, even after his return, frequently felt compelled to defend his actions. He insisted that, although he had been given the power to decide how to defend the Republic, he had consulted with the Senate before taking action and had been backed by them.²³ Interestingly, in the debate discussing the fate of the conspirators, Julius Caesar advocated life in prison or exile, while Cato the Younger argued strongly for the death penalty.²⁴

Rawson, in her biography of Cicero, says that from the moment Cicero's consulship ended, Cicero's political life became a political failure.²⁵ She criticizes his desire for constant praise but recognizes that a *novus homo* would have more need for this, since *dignitas* and public recognition were not automatically his. However, she states that Cicero was incapable of holding his tongue and, therefore, made people believe that he lacked the *gravitas* for leadership. Cicero also needed to keep reminding Rome of the role he had played during his consulship to ward off repercussions from his execution of the conspirators.²⁶ His actions during his consulship certainly prove that *gravitas* was not an issue. However, despite his justified

²³ Plut., *Cic.* 20-21.

²⁴ Suet., *Iul.* 14; Sall., *Cat.* 51.

²⁵ Rawson 89.

²⁶ Rawson 91.

pride in the actions he believed had saved his country, he was correct that his treatment of the Catilinarians would return to bite him.

CICERO, THE BONA DEA SCANDAL AND CLODIUS: DUBIOUS CHOICES?

Unfortunately for Cicero, his next political error immediately followed his consulship. In 62 B.C., the famous Bona Dea scandal occurred. The mysteries of the Bona Dea, a strictly female religious rite, were celebrated annually at the home of the wife of the *pontifex maximus* who, at the time, was Julius Caesar. The perpetrator, Publius Claudius Pulcher, later known as Clodius, was a rather dissolute young man, a member of a group of similarly inclined youths. Huzar says that Marcus Antonius may also have been a member of this group of youths that Cicero had once dubbed the 'Catiline set'.²⁷ Clodius was purported to be having an affair with Pompeia, Caesar's wife. Disguised as a woman, Clodius managed to crash the party but was discovered and fled. However, he was recognized, identified and, in 61, brought to trial.²⁸ Although guilty, he managed to bribe the jury and was acquitted. His defense was that he had not been in Rome on the date of the ceremony. Cicero, however, had seen him on that day in Rome because Clodius had come to visit him. Epstein believes that that visit is proof of an ongoing early friendship between Clodius and Cicero. Nonetheless, Cicero ultimately decided to testify against Clodius, destroying his alibi.²⁹

Cicero's role in the aftermath of that scandal was really unnecessary, another poor political decision that cost him dearly. Although he later claimed moral outrage,

²⁷ Eleanor Goltz Huzar, *Mark Antony, a Biography* (Minneapolis: UMin Press, 1978) 19-20, 37.

²⁸ Tatum, J. "Cicero and The Bona Dea Scandal." *CPh* 85 (1990) 202-208; 202.

²⁹ Epstein, D. "Cicero's Testimony at the Bona Dea Trial." *CPh* 81 (1986) 229-235; 233.

Cicero's early reference to Clodius' sacrilege had an amused rather than offended tone.³⁰ However, although he states that a friendship once existed between the two men, Epstein believes that Cicero still harbored distrust and resentment against Clodius for the purported connection between Clodius' and Catiline's supporters in 63.³¹ Alternatively, Plutarch says that at some point Clodius may even have acted as one of Cicero's bodyguards. Cicero claimed that he had actually opposed bringing Clodius to trial until the last minute and had only assisted the prosecution half-heartedly.³² Epstein states that Cicero believed that it would have been better for Clodius to carry the stain of his sacrilege rather than be exonerated by a corrupt jury.³³ In any event, there was no political enmity or strong reason for Cicero to have involved himself against Clodius in the resultant prosecution of the affair.

Tatum says that Cicero's consulship and Cicero himself became necessary to the prosecution of Clodius because his actions during the Catilinarian conspiracy made Cicero the "vital symbol of *senatus auctoritas*."³⁴ This may have been good press for Clodius' enemies who were pushing for a trial, but still not an explanation for Cicero's personal involvement, although this ego-stroking was probably very intoxicating and alluring to him.

Cicero would certainly have disapproved of Clodius' behavior during a solemn religious rite, especially dressing as a woman and committing sacrilege.³⁵ Cicero later referred to himself as a champion of *senatus auctoritas* for testifying at the trial and

³⁰ Epstein 230; *Att.* 1.12.3.

³¹ *Att.* 1.14.5; Epstein 230.

³² *Att.* 1.16.1-2.

³³ Epstein 231-232.

³⁴ W. Jeffrey Tatum, *The Patrician Tribune Publius Clodius Pulcher* (Chapel Hill: No. Carolina UPress, 1999) 77.

³⁵ Tatum, 208.

viewed Clodius' acquittal as a travesty of justice that cast aspersions upon the 'monuments' of his consulship.³⁶ He claimed to have acted to restore the health of the Republic. Once again, however, his motives for involving himself in that circumstance deserve investigation.

Plutarch says that Terentia, Cicero's wife, may have been jealous of Clodius' sister, Clodia Metelli, believing that Cicero was attracted to her and may have even wanted to marry her. His testimony against Clodius would prove to Terentia that her suspicions were unfounded. Plutarch suggests another intriguing scenario for Cicero's involvement. Terentia's sister, Fabia, a vestal virgin, may have been prosecuted by Clodius for having relations with Catiline, a capital crime for the priestess. In any event, Plutarch states that Cicero's testimony demolished Clodius' alibi.³⁷

It is possible that there were other more personal, career related, motivations for Cicero to volunteer his services at trial. Cicero, as a *novus homo*, was always aware of his inferior status among the cream of political society and sought ways to ingratiate himself with them.³⁸ Clodius had many enemies among the better people and Cicero knew that siding with them might elevate his status. Tatum suggests that Cicero did not fear Clodius in any way as a political opponent or he might have reconsidered his involvement in the affair. Tatum concludes, however, that Cicero probably did not wish to destroy Clodius. He genuinely believed him to be guilty of a serious crime against society. Therefore, he was motivated more by unselfish civic responsibility and loyalty

³⁶ Tatum 205.

³⁷ Plut., *Cic.* 29.

³⁸ David Stockton, *Cicero: A Political Biography* (London: Oxford UP, 1971) 161.

to the senate's authority than by political self-promotion.³⁹ Some historians suggest that Cicero's testimony against Clodius constitutes ingratitude if indeed Clodius had backed Cicero against Catiline.⁴⁰

There are only two genuine defenses for Cicero's testimony: either Clodius' actions offended his moral sense, or his belief that Clodius had been a Catiline sympathizer. However, by the time of the trial, Cicero was no longer in the spotlight at Rome and this was unacceptable to the man who had once saved his country and basked in that glory. He needed to elevate himself once again among those whose influence and approbation he sought. This was a golden opportunity to turn the eyes of Rome to a man who was rescuing her yet again, this time from moral turpitude.

Cicero's motivation must have been unimportant to Clodius who remained his enemy throughout the latter's lifetime. Clodius wanted only to be acquitted while Cicero presented himself as the defender of senatorial authority.⁴¹

CICERO, REJECTION OF A JOB OFFER AND EXILE: SELF-IMPOSED PROBLEMS?

By 59, because of his political ambitions, Clodius, with Caesar's help, had been adopted by the plebeian branch of his own family in order to legally run for tribune, a position not open to patricians. He became tribune of the plebs in December 59.⁴² Just prior to this time, Cicero had declined becoming the fourth member of what evolved into the First Triumvirate of Caesar, Pompey and Crassus. Cicero considered this alliance a betrayal of the Roman constitution and rule of law. Everitt calls this the

³⁹ Tatum, 207-208.

⁴⁰ W.K. Lacey, *Cicero and the End of the Roman Republic* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1978) 53.

⁴¹ Lacey 54.

⁴² Rawson 113.

turning point of Cicero's career.⁴³ He had rejected power for idealism. Cicero had sealed his fate. The triumvirs no longer supported Cicero's presence in Rome where he still wielded influence in the Senate.⁴⁴

Clodius was now Caesar's man. After Cicero had turned down Caesar's offer to share power, Cicero now rightly feared Clodius.⁴⁵ In late 59 and early 58, Clodius used that fear to manipulate him into backing bills that Cicero would have considered "pernicious." Clodius was obviously promising to protect and spare Cicero in return for this assistance.⁴⁶ Cicero could not have approved of the restored right to associate in clubs or *collegia*, especially since he had been part of the Senate six years earlier when they had been banned. He also would not have approved of Clodius' motion to reduce the power of higher magistrates, nor his measure for free grain distribution to the people.⁴⁷ While he had been true to his convictions when refusing to support the First Triumvirate, he appeared suddenly to have abandoned the welfare of the State to save himself from any retribution Clodius could threaten.

It would seem, however, that Clodius was playing cat and mouse with Cicero because, in late January or early February of 58, Clodius introduced a bill, re-enacting an older law, which denied fire and water to anyone who had put citizens to death without a trial. It is more than possible that he was encouraged in this by Caesar who needed Clodius' backing so that Caesar's laws of 59 would not be annulled. Cicero knew that this action was directed at him and his consulate and could find no one to

⁴³ Everitt 321.

⁴⁴ Rawson 131.

⁴⁵ Rawson 111.

⁴⁶ Rawson 113.

⁴⁷ Rawson 111-113.

help him. Caesar's explanation for his inability to intervene in Cicero's behalf was the fact that he had always disapproved of the Catilinarian executions, and had vehemently spoken against them at the time.⁴⁸

This was a desperate time for Cicero and another turning point in his life. As he looked around Rome, he realized that even those who purported to be on his side did not have the power and influence to change his fate. They, too, were living in a changed Republic and were more interested in their own political survival. They were unwilling to challenge the new triumvirate in Cicero's behalf. Cicero could have waited to see how events would culminate, but he knew that it was unlikely things would turn in his favor. So he was forced to leave Rome before he was officially exiled. For eighteen months, he lived in a near suicidal depression, on the verge of a breakdown.⁴⁹

Pompey is the worst offender in this scenario. In several of his letters to Atticus prior to his ultimate decision to leave Rome, Cicero voices confidence in his fellow consulars and especially in Pompey as a loyal defender of his interests. "Pompeius tells me not to worry about Clodius, and expresses the most cordial sentiments towards me in everything he says."⁵⁰ However, Pompey did nothing to help Cicero except to give him vague reassurances and in the end tacitly allowed the exile to happen.⁵¹ Cicero could have anticipated Clodius' revenge as well as his political reasons for sending him into exile. Caesar was no real friend to Cicero, especially after Cicero had clearly shown his opposition to the triumvirate's plans. Therefore, he could not have expected much support from Caesar. He might even have accepted the lack of action

⁴⁸ Rawson 114-115.

⁴⁹ Rawson 118.

⁵⁰ *Att.* 2.24.5.

⁵¹ Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, Vol. I. Trans. D.R. Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge: LCL, 1999), intro. 7.

by many of his fellow senators who were protecting their own political futures. He could never have predicted Pompey's betrayal, especially since he had always idolized Pompey and treated him with great deference.

By May 58, Cicero was in exile. He had left of his own accord knowing that the exile was inevitable without Caesar and Pompey relenting in their positions. His decision to leave was humiliating, costing him the prestige and *auctoritas* he had earned from his years in public life.⁵² Upon his departure, Clodius proposed another bill condemning Cicero whereby all of his property and goods were confiscated. Subsequently, his mansion in Rome was burned to the ground and his Tusculan villa looted. Clodius even accused Cicero of having invented the evidence that condemned the Catilinarian conspirators. Cicero himself was forbidden to come within 400 miles of Italy.⁵³

Cicero was finally recalled by the Senate in August 57, although he was never exonerated of Clodius' charges nor were Clodius' bills repealed. Cicero's actions were simply exempted from those laws.⁵⁴ Although he was a somewhat broken man, the reception he received from the people and his colleagues upon his return did much to lift his spirits. He began to believe that his return might bring a return of order and legality to Rome, a mistaken assumption.⁵⁵ Shackleton-Bailey points out that Cicero's egotistical response to his triumphant welcome home soon alienated him from some of the senatorial leaders. He seemed to view the triumphant greeting he received upon his return as proof that he truly was indispensable to Rome. This attitude angered and

⁵² Rawson 116.

⁵³ Rawson, 117.

⁵⁴ Rawson 121.

⁵⁵ Rawson 121.

disappointed many people who believed that Cicero should have returned a more cautious man, having been properly chastised by the powers that be.⁵⁶

Cicero quickly learned that not everyone was as exhilarated by his return as he had assumed. The Senate had made restitution to Cicero and his family for the confiscation of property by paying for the construction of a new home for Cicero and another for his brother Quintus on the Palatine. Clodius was apparently guilty of sending men to both sites to interrupt construction and vandalize the properties. Cicero was subsequently assaulted on the Via Sacra.⁵⁷ Evidently, Clodius' enmity for Cicero had not abated in spite of his positive reception from others. Huzar opines that Antony, at the time still a confederate of Clodius, may have been involved in the destruction of the property.⁵⁸

Indeed, exile had changed Cicero. He now lacked confidence, was unsure of his place in Roman society, and did not have a clear view of the political scene in Rome. He claimed not to be happy with Rome or with himself and he was helpless to remedy his situation.⁵⁹ Shackleton Bailey says that he briefly tried to stay politically independent and take advantage of any rifts he saw in the triumvirate, but their pact was reinforced at Lucca in 56.⁶⁰ Pompey then warned him to watch his step.⁶¹ He had learned from hard experience that his best choice was to stay out of trouble and hope that things would change. Dickinson states that Cicero hated himself for having to make this decision, but he should have forgiven himself because he was not really serving the

⁵⁶ Shackleton Bailey, 74.

⁵⁷ Rawson 123-126; Shackleton Bailey 77; *Att.* 1.8.3.

⁵⁸ Huzar 26.

⁵⁹ Dickinson 140.

⁶⁰ Shackleton Bailey 80-83.

⁶¹ Cicero, *Fam.* 1.8; 1.9.8-9.

triumvirs. Although weakened politically, Cicero was still extraordinarily bright and astute. He stepped to the side, maintained friendly relations with all of the important people, took cases he did not necessarily want and occasionally made a speech in favor of the triumvirate if he believed in what they were doing, as he did in regard to Caesar's command in Gaul.⁶² Despite complaints about his life at Rome to Quintus and others during this time,⁶³ Shackleton-Bailey does not believe he was as uncomfortable as he made others believe. For him the "labor of pleading was a labor of love."⁶⁴ He probably was having a fine time appearing in court and enjoying an active social life. He was relatively safe since he had removed himself from politics and only appeared publicly at the bar, but not as a statesman.⁶⁵ In a letter to Atticus, he states: "I do not remember the heights from which I fell but the depth from which I have risen."⁶⁶

The triumvirate became shaky. Caesar's daughter Julia, married to Pompey, had died in childbirth in 54, thus loosening the ties holding Caesar and Pompey together. Crassus' death in 53 was the real death knell. From that time on, Caesar and Pompey vied for supremacy in Rome.⁶⁷

From May 51 to November 50, Cicero was away from Rome as proconsul in Cilicia.⁶⁸ Upon his return to Rome in 49, the situation between Caesar and Pompey had worsened. Cicero did not know which way to turn. Both Caesar and Pompey considered him a friend.⁶⁹ Soon after his return to Rome after his proconsulship, Cicero

⁶² Dickinson 140.

⁶³ Cicero, *Q.Fr.* 3.5.4.

⁶⁴ Shackleton Bailey 89.

⁶⁵ Dickinson 141.

⁶⁶ *Att.* 4.18.2.13.

⁶⁷ Shackleton Bailey 96.

⁶⁸ Shackleton Bailey 104.

⁶⁹ *Att.* 7.1.3.

believed that he might be able to serve as a negotiator between Pompey and Caesar.

However, this plan never came to fruition.⁷⁰

CICERO AND POMPEY, FRIENDS AGAIN: BETTING ON THE WRONG HORSE?

Cicero was about to make his next misguided political decision. Cicero had always favored Pompey in spite of the latter's betrayal with regard to his exile, since Pompey had also been very instrumental in Cicero's return. Therefore, the combination of his early affection and current gratitude made Cicero lean more heavily towards Pompey. He also believed Pompey less likely to become a tyrannical despot than Caesar. He also must have believed that Pompey had a good chance of emerging the victor in this civil war. In letters to Atticus, Cicero stated that siding with Pompey was the best way for him to protect his own political influence; he also would rather be defeated with Pompey than victorious with Caesar.⁷¹ He ultimately decided to support Pompey, but urged him to pursue a course for peace. As it turned out, Pompey did not desire peace.⁷² Even after he ascertained this, Cicero gave his staunch support to Pompey and now considered Caesar an enemy.

When Caesar crossed the Rubicon, Cicero was terribly discouraged. because he felt that neither Pompey nor Caesar cared about the welfare of the people of Rome; they were fighting strictly to win supremacy.⁷³ Cicero then hoped that Caesar would allow him to stay out of politics. At first Caesar apparently not only acquiesced in, but

⁷⁰ Shackleton Bailey 134-155.

⁷¹ Rawson 186.

⁷² Geweke, L. "Notes on the Political Relationship of Cicero and Atticus from 56 to 43 B.C." *CJ* 32 (1937) 471; *Att.* 7.8.4.

⁷³ Rawson 192.

was pleased with, Cicero's lack of involvement. However, by March of 49 B.C., Caesar was urging Cicero to return to active politics in Rome and was becoming displeased with Cicero's absence.⁷⁴ Ultimately, Caesar's unwillingness to permit him to remain neutral reinforced Cicero's loyalty to Pompey, but meanwhile continued to vacillate, and sought Atticus' advice as to when or whether to join Pompey.⁷⁵

Cicero ultimately decided to join Pompey and began to make plans to leave Italy. Both Antonius and Caesar strongly urged Cicero not to do so. Antonius even made veiled threats against Cicero and his family. Caesar himself wrote to Cicero to dissuade him from this action.⁷⁶ Cicero left from Gaeta to join Pompey's troops in June of 49.⁷⁷ No one had contact with him for about seven months, when he reappeared in Thessalonica, the site chosen by Pompey. Eventually, he traveled to Pompey's camp in Dyrrachium. During his time with Pompey, Cicero was frequently indisposed. On the day that Pompey left to follow Caesar, a move that ended on August 9 in Pharsalia, Cicero was once again not well enough to join him. Nonetheless, Cicero had cast his die with Pompey and he was stuck with that decision until after the Battle of Pharsalus, the defeat of Pompey and ostensible end of the civil war.⁷⁸

In effect, Cicero was once again exiled from Rome, this time at Brundisium, as a Pompeian loyalist. His political acumen had failed him. His future was in Caesar's hands. He needed Caesar's leniency, forgiveness and permission to return to Rome,

⁷⁴ Rawson, 194; Shackleton Bailey 155.

⁷⁵ Shackleton Bailey 134-155.

⁷⁶ *Att.* 10.8A&B; 10.10.

⁷⁷ Shackleton Bailey 165-166; *Att.* 7.8.4; *Fam.* 14.7.

⁷⁸ Shackleton Bailey 167-171.

which was granted in the winter of 48.⁷⁹ Once again, his life at Rome was unexpectedly different and confusing to him. The civil war had taken its toll on so many of his former associates. Caelius, Milo, Pompey, Bibulus, Cato, among others, were gone.⁸⁰ But, as he had before, Cicero displayed a resiliency in character. He strengthened old friendships and established new ones.⁸¹ He created a new life for himself in and around Rome.

Caesar actually needed Cicero's support at this point in Rome. As victor, he was now alone and needed to establish a new order. Cicero was one of the few elder statesmen left, and he had always supported the Republic and the constitution. If Cicero's voice could be heard in favor of Caesar and his policies, Caesar would have an easier time consolidating his status. Cicero was an ex-consul, a lawyer, an augur, the author of *De Re Publica* and, even better, a former ally of Pompey. With his friends and power of persuasion, Cicero would be an ideal supporter of Caesar. Early in Caesar's solo rule, Cicero may even have deluded himself into believing that Caesar was still thinking of restoring the old constitution.⁸² Syme viewed that constitution in the context of the time as a "screen and a sham."⁸³ According to Rawson, there is much disagreement among scholars as to whether Caesar could have possibly been leaning in that direction. It is just as likely that Caesar had always envisioned a type of monarchy as his solution for Rome.⁸⁴ The fundamental difference between these two great men was that Caesar wanted a new government, however that finally emerged,

⁷⁹ Rawson 202.

⁸⁰ Rawson 203.

⁸¹ Rawson 209.

⁸² Rawson 221.

⁸³ Syme 15.

⁸⁴ Rawson 221.

while Cicero wanted new and better men to run the existing one with new and better laws.⁸⁵ Nonetheless, he continued to have influence, socializing with Caesar and his circle, discussing literature and other cultural topics, and occasionally using that good will to seek favors for friends.⁸⁶ Cicero contented himself with his idealistic notions of a perfect state and survived well within the current one.

Yet Cicero's career after his consulship seemed to lead him from one form of exile to another. He never regained his self-confidence or his former high status in public life. He spoke his mind to Atticus and a few select others but, outside of his allusions to the politics of the day in his forensic speeches, he no longer sought the limelight of the forum to express himself. He claimed to be dishonored by the new form of government.⁸⁷

THE IDEAL ROMAN: A DREAM, ASPIRATION OR SELF-DELUSION?

From 46 to 44, when Cicero retired from public life, he spent most of his time writing and had essentially put himself into voluntary exile from politics.⁸⁸ In this quasi-solitude, reading and writing philosophy and other treatises, Cicero cemented his thoughts and opinions about how affairs would be conducted in a perfect republican state. He believed that through these political treatises he had found another way of addressing the Senate to deliver his message that traditional political values needed to be restored.⁸⁹ This period in Cicero's life immediately precedes the assassination of

⁸⁵ Everitt 321.

⁸⁶ Shackleton Bailey 225.

⁸⁷ Shackleton Bailey 224.

⁸⁸ Rawson 230-231.

⁸⁹ Everitt 321.

Julius Caesar. Thus, it is essential to briefly study how Cicero's political and social ideals developed during this critical period in order to see how they influenced the Cicero who emerged as a leader after Caesar's death.

In Cicero's opinion, his contemporary statesmen were guilty of vices that had not existed in his ideal, the early Roman Republic. They were jealous and possessed by personal hatreds which promoted dissension and sedition and destroyed civic spirit. They did not display a proper sense of responsibility and placed their own priorities above those of the community.⁹⁰ In his *Paradoxa Stoicorum*, Cicero also criticized what he believed to be the two most significant negative features of his contemporary Rome: the frantic desire for money and possessions and the need for their extravagant conspicuous spending. The early heroes of Rome were satisfied with praise and glory for achieving their happiness.⁹¹

Cicero believed in a constitutional government that promoted justice and morality. Men were "born for justice" because they were 'amiable' and had the capacity to reason.⁹² Justice is the "foundation of common interest and hence of the state."⁹³ Serving the government was a moral duty and brought out *virtus* in men.⁹⁴ Further, governments should seek to be loved, not feared.⁹⁵

Cicero was very specific about the characteristics of the ideal statesman which he considered to be the highest calling for a citizen. Although unable to fulfill everything

⁹⁰ Dickinson 286.

⁹¹ Lacey 118.

⁹² Dickinson 45-46.

⁹³ Wood 129.

⁹⁴ Wood 121.

⁹⁵ Dickinson 266-270.

in every category he set forth, one can be assured that in his own estimation, Cicero came closer to fulfilling the ideal throughout his career than any politician he had known.

The ideal statesman should possess wisdom, both personal and political. His life should be one of moderation with his passions held in check. He must believe above all in justice and, therefore, lead his life with honor and integrity as an example of excellence in his life and character. Bribery and corruption should not be able to entice him because he is satisfied with a love for glory. He must display manliness, courage and generosity, and make himself easily available to his fellow citizens, always working seriously and energetically. He should possess excellent public speaking skills for persuasion. His leadership skills, both civic and military, should be exemplary. With all of that, *fortuna* was essential, because without good luck, success could not be assured.⁹⁶

The ultimate goal was the preservation of the state, the maintenance of law and order, and defense against external threats.⁹⁷ Above all, Cicero believed in the *concordia ordinum*, a harmonious condition of the social classes governing themselves through a mixed constitution where equality was reached essentially through a caste system. However unfair this may seem in the context of our own view of democracy, Cicero was convinced that the laws of Rome were “consonant with the laws of nature,” covering religious, social and moral values.⁹⁸

In *De Officiis*, Cicero stated that there was nothing more unworthy in a state governed by laws than to depart from the laws and that the essence of tyranny is

⁹⁶ Wood 178.

⁹⁷ Wood 193.

⁹⁸ Rawson 154.

lawlessness.⁹⁹ Since man is only human, to find one with all of the above characteristics would be impossible. Therefore, Cicero believed that politics was best conducted by elder statesmen who were less susceptible to temptation.¹⁰⁰ When Cicero returned to his leadership position in the turmoil following Caesar's assassination he was 62 years old, the perfect age for fulfilling his vision of the ideal statesman.

It is difficult to disagree with Cicero's critics who call his post-consular career one of disappointments and humiliation. It was also one of comparative political inactivity and indecision. Were it not for his letters to Atticus and others, he would not have been as visible to history because he was not, thereafter, a critical character in the ensuing events. However, throughout his correspondence, he always seemed to want to be more active and involved and, by blowing the occasional horn, to appear more important than he actually was. Nonetheless, so many of his later letters are written from places other than Rome, that he obviously spent a great deal of time away from the city. He never forgot his glory days when he had been the savior of Rome. He must have regretted his inability to recreate that status in his life.

⁹⁹ Dickinson 266-270.

¹⁰⁰ Wood 181.

LIFE AFTER DEATH: CICERO, PRE-PHILIPPICS AFTER THE IDES OF MARCH

Then, finally, in the five months after Caesar's assassination, Cicero's outside involvement with the three major factions that would ultimately lead to civil war and the end of the Republic, drew him out of an almost twenty-year near retirement from active politics to undertake the most reckless and dangerous action of his entire career.

CICERO AND THE TYRANNICIDES: ANOTHER BAD WAGER?

On March 15 in 44 immediately following Caesar's assassination, Marcus Brutus, with bloody dagger in his hand, shouted out Cicero's name. Cicero had been neither a participant nor a conspirator in this deed. However, his consistent opposition to tyranny and his devotion to the constitution and preservation of the Republic had made him an inspiration for the men who had decided to end Caesar's reign.¹⁰¹ To them, he personified the Rome they hoped would be re-established. The conspirators had judged Caesar a tyrant who was prepared to be king and they had decided to become the Republic's liberators.

Until Caesar's death, Cicero had maintained a very cordial relationship with the dictator. They shared their writing with each other¹⁰² and, in December of 45, Cicero entertained Caesar at Puteoli.¹⁰³ Yet Cicero immediately approved of the actions of the Liberators on the Ides of March and was willing to act in their behalf to preserve their safety and maintain their status in Rome.

¹⁰¹ Frisch 97.

¹⁰² *Att.* 13.30.1

¹⁰³ *Att.* 13.52.

However, their strategy seems never to have gone beyond the deed itself. As Cicero wrote to Atticus from Puteoli in May of 44, “That affair was handled with the courage of men and the policy of children.”¹⁰⁴ The errors in action and judgment began immediately upon the completion of their task. The tyrannicides never proclaimed their deed an act of heroism that rid the state of a tyrant and restored its liberty.¹⁰⁵ They seemed to assume that the people would simply recognize that they now had a choice in government, and would be grateful for or forgetful of the necessary murder.¹⁰⁶ The liberators’ lack of foresight permitted them to believe that no one would try to prevent the Republic from returning to its pre-Caesarian days. The constitution would return to its intended functions and the Senate would re-assume the power it had lost.¹⁰⁷ In reality, the conspirators could never have restored what had existed prior to the civil war. The Republic had really become a pipe dream, a wisp of its original greatness, which could only exist in dreams and memories.

The collaborators also erroneously believed that Julius Caesar represented the only obstacle to the liberty of the people and, upon his demise, it would rematerialize in perfect form.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, the conspirators had decided not to kill Marcus Antonius along with Caesar, something Cicero came to regard as their most serious mistake.¹⁰⁹ Antonius’ reputation and actions had caused them to believe that he lacked the qualities that would make him a genuine threat to step into Caesar’s role.¹¹⁰ In addition, for the

¹⁰⁴ Att.14.21.3.1.

¹⁰⁵ Frisch 42.

¹⁰⁶ Gaston Boissier, *Cicero and his Friends A Study of Roman Society in the Time of Caesar* (New York: Cooper Sq., 1970 – reprint of 1897) 342.

¹⁰⁷ Everitt 273.

¹⁰⁸ Boissier 342.

¹⁰⁹ Syme 183.

¹¹⁰ Everitt 273.

assassins, the murder was almost a sacred ritual that went beyond politics, symbolizing the cleansing of the Republic.¹¹¹ According to Appian, Brutus declared that he and his collaborators could only win the glory of the tyrannicide with the death of Caesar alone. Including Antonius in their plot would have subjected them to accusations of private enmity and minimized the sanctity of their action.¹¹²

Cicero knew that if ever there were to have been a chance for events to turn in favor of the assassins, they would have had to summon an immediate meeting of the Senate. Cicero encouraged them to do this on March 16. Since the consul, Marcus Antonius, had fled, Brutus and Cassius as praetors had the legal right to call that meeting.¹¹³ It is surprising that they decided against this because they had always believed that their command of a majority of the Senate who would approve of the assassination and help them re-establish an appropriate government was assured.¹¹⁴ Cicero could not convince them to actively fight any Caesarian opposition, especially Antonius.¹¹⁵ On March 16, Marcus Brutus did attempt to talk to the people, but his style was too dry and unpersuasive to reach them. According to a letter dated May 18, 44, Cicero had received a copy of that speech which Brutus was editing for publication. Although respectful of their differences in oratorical styles, Cicero was critical of its content, mentioning that he had offered to write something for Brutus that he thought would have worked better.¹¹⁶ The assassins then retreated to the Capitoline. They wanted to negotiate with Antonius, whom they believed to be the legal and rightful

¹¹¹ Everitt 272.

¹¹² App., *B. Civ.* 2.114.

¹¹³ Rawson 260.

¹¹⁴ Frisch 51.

¹¹⁵ Syme 183; Boissier 351.

¹¹⁶ *Att.* 15.1a.

consul, even though he had essentially been appointed by Caesar.¹¹⁷ They had chosen to deal with the person that Caesar's death had made the strongest military and political man in Rome.¹¹⁸

Initially they proposed that the Caesarians join them on the Capitoline to plan for the future. They approached the matter as if they had the upper hand, promising that all positions and other remuneration that his followers had received from Caesar would be considered 'authorized gifts.' They accomplished nothing.¹¹⁹

Although he had fled, Antonius was not sitting idly by waiting for events to unfold. He recognized his own powerful position and wanted to protect it. On March 16, Antonius visited Calpurnia, Caesar's widow, in order to obtain from her four thousand talents and Caesar's papers. The papers would make it appear that projects Antonius undertook or decisions he made were backed up by previous memoranda of Caesar. He also took 700 million sesterces from the Temple of Ops.¹²⁰

On March 17, Antonius called a Senate meeting at the Temple of Tellus close to his home, still unsure of his own safety. Huzar says that Caesar was still "master of state" at that meeting and that Antonius, as consul, established his domination of the state.¹²¹ Antonius was extremely clever in his manipulation of this session. He managed to appear conciliatory without diminishing Caesar's former status. He therefore proposed a compromise whereby all of Caesar's acts would be approved. He then pointed out that if Caesar were to be considered a tyrant, all of his appointments

¹¹⁷ Huzar 48.

¹¹⁸ Huzar 80.

¹¹⁹ Frisch 49.

¹²⁰ Huzar 83.

¹²¹ Huzar 84.

would be nullified and illegal, causing many of the members of his audience to lose their current positions and throwing the Empire into disorder. Since that declaration could not be made without causing tremendous turmoil, Antonius proposed that the conspirators go unpunished, but also unpraised. It was also decided that Caesar's will should be read and a public funeral held for Caesar. As a result of the amnesty and compromise, all of Caesar's acts and his party survived as if he were still alive and the liberators lost their only chance of ever holding sway over the Senate again.¹²²

However, early on, Cicero was thrilled with the results of the March 17 meeting. He praised Antonius and felt that the best results had been achieved through the amnesty and was responsible for preventing a possible civil war.¹²³ Antonius had remained polite and courteous to everyone, an attitude which he projected for months even though relations were becoming strained.¹²⁴ Cicero decided to leave Rome and return to Puteoli where he could keep tabs on events from a distance. It is difficult to understand how Cicero did not view the Ides of March and its aftermath as an incipient crisis at Rome and how he could believe his presence was no longer needed. This very well could have been his real opportunity to step in to preserve what was left of the Republic. At that moment in history, he was on good terms with all sides. Antonius seemed pliant and available. The tyrannicides were still in Rome, anxious to repair any rifts and continue in their roles as leading citizens. Cicero's departure, particularly before Caesar's funeral, is at odds with his own view of the appropriate role of a senior statesman in a state that needed help.

¹²² Syme 99, 106.

¹²³ Mitchell 291-292.

¹²⁴ Ramsey, John T. "The Senate, Mark Antony and Caesar's Legislative Legacy." CQ 44(1994) 130-145; 130.

Perhaps because his name had been shouted out immediately following the murder, Cicero believed that by staying he might be too closely associated with a deed that did not belong to him, especially if he lent too much support to its perpetrators. Perhaps he had grown accustomed to a less active role in politics existence and was not ready to take on a larger role other than that of an ally to the Republican cause. Perhaps he trusted that Marcus Antonius, released from Caesar's hold, was genuinely working towards a concord that included all sides of the issues. In any event, if ever his statesmanship was needed, it was then and he let an important opportunity slip through his fingers.

Caesar's funeral was Antonius' *tour de force*. He knew that the people loved Caesar. He, therefore, played on their emotions, reminding them that the Senate had once voted him "all the divine and human honors at once," that he had been sacrosanct and that they had pledged to watch over his personal safety.¹²⁵ Antonius had cleverly arranged for a wax effigy of Caesar, complete with the twenty-three stab wounds he had received, to be raised above the already aroused crowd. Mayhem ensued; the Senate building was razed; the mob went in pursuit of Caesar's slaughterers.¹²⁶ The people had clearly shown the assassins that their lives were no longer safe in Rome. They were forced to secretly leave town. There was no question that Antonius had gained complete control. He had removed any further threat from the tyrannicides and had elevated his own position with the people.¹²⁷ Antonius' power now lay in his position

¹²⁵ Suetonius, *Iul.* 84.

¹²⁶ App., *B. Civ.* 3.2.

¹²⁷ Frisch 61-62.

between Caesar's murderers."¹²⁸ Caesar was indeed dead, but the Ides of March had failed. and his "worshippers

On April 10, Cicero was still praising the liberators. He praised the "heroes" to Atticus, claiming that they had acted gloriously and that all that was necessary for their future success was money and troops.¹²⁹ On April 12, he found Antonius' interview with the conspirators satisfactory, but stated that overall the only thing that made him truly happy was the Ides of March itself.¹³⁰ Cicero was pleased that Caesar's death was highly regarded by many as the assassination of a tyrant. However, he felt that Caesar might as well still have been ruling since no significant changes had taken place at Rome.¹³¹ On April 16, Antonius again received praise for the improvement in his relationship with Brutus.¹³² By April 19, however, Cicero had begun to bemoan the inaction of the liberators, condemning them for not having called their own meeting of the Senate on the Ides. He had also changed his tone concerning the decisions made on the 17th, in particular allowing the public funeral held for Caesar.¹³³ On April 22, he had begun to speak of Antonius' improper use, and probable forgery, of Caesar's memoranda, and the fact that Octavian had arrived on the scene to claim his inheritance.¹³⁴ Cicero was in the perfect frame of mind at that moment to become putty in the hands of the cunning and underestimated young Octavian.

¹²⁸ Frisch 89.

¹²⁹ *Att.* 14.4.2.

¹³⁰ *Att.* 14.6.1.5-7.

¹³¹ *Att.* 14.6.2.1-6.

¹³² *Att.* 14.38.1.3-4.

¹³³ *Att.* 14.10.1.

¹³⁴ *Att.* 14.12.1.

CICERO AND OCTAVIAN: ERROR IN JUDGMENT OR NESTOR'S AGAMEMNON?

The character of Octavian was seriously misjudged from the moment he appeared on the scene to claim his inheritance. Gaius Octavius, great nephew and adopted son of Julius Caesar, took on the name Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus. Because of the uncertain and potentially dangerous political climate, Octavian's mother and stepfather tried to discourage the youth from leaving home and accepting the inheritance. However, Octavian was determined to enter the fray and immediately confront his future.¹³⁵ Considering his later actions at the end of the civil war and his ultimate role as *princeps*, he must have possessed a great deal of charm and the ability to convincingly dissemble so that no one seemed to sense his genuine feelings and goals. It was only later that his innate intelligence and talent for manipulation became apparent.

History shows that Octavian did not emphasize his relationship to Caesar. He was clear and resolute about his ultimate goals and was in no special hurry to reach them. He was able to maintain a certain modesty about himself without losing sight of the end.¹³⁶ There is something almost sociopathological about Octavian's behavior. He seemed to have had the ability to ignore any social conscience or moral responsibility towards those with whom he allied himself from his arrival on the scene up to and including his triumviral alliance with Antonius and Lepidus. He could make alliances and break them, make friends and ultimately sacrifice them. He kept his emotions, if he had any, out of his decisions. He had no problem with betrayal because it was exactly

¹³⁵ Syme 120-122.

¹³⁶ Zvi Yavetz, "The Personality of Augustus." *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and his Principate*, ed. K.A. Raafaub and M. Toher (Berkeley: UCal Press, 1990) 32.

what he expected of others.¹³⁷ In the end, he wanted power and glory for himself and he was willing to play both parties, Caesarian and Ciceronian, against each other.

Cicero was one of the first people to be won over by the 18 year old youth who appeared at his home in April, 44. In a letter dated April 19, Cicero told Atticus that Octavian had arrived in Naples, determined to accept his inheritance, but aware that Antony might be an obstacle for him.¹³⁸ By April 22 in Puteoli,¹³⁹ the friendly and respectful Octavian was already with Cicero who, at that moment, was a little wary about the young man's future. He was also unsure of Octavian's entourage who were clearly negatively disposed to the conspirators. Octavian could never be a *bonus civis* because he was too young, related to Caesar and surrounded by Caesarian zealots.¹⁴⁰ In addition, he could never truly ally himself with the conspirators and save the Republic. Apparently, Octavian worked on Cicero, flattering his vanity, asking for advice and Cicero, unaware of Octavian's inner strength and determination, viewed Octavian as a tool to be used against Antonius. Octavian made Cicero believe that he would be compliant to his advice and loyal to the republican cause.¹⁴¹ He even convinced Cicero that he respected and admired the conspirators.¹⁴² According to Mitchell, Cicero believed that, under his tutelage, Octavian would be the new leader of the *concordia ordinum* after Caesar's death. In June, Cicero clearly stated to Atticus that he was not sure how much faith to put in Octavian because of his youth, name and family heritage, and his education. Cicero had apparently spoken with Octavian's stepfather recently

¹³⁷ Yavetz 32-33.

¹³⁸ *Att.* 14.10.3.3.

¹³⁹ *Att* 14.12.2.

¹⁴⁰ Mitchell 304.

¹⁴¹ Huzar 97,101.

¹⁴² Mitchell 304; *Att.* 15.12.2.4.

who apparently did not think very highly of the lad's capabilities. In spite of that opinion, Cicero still believed that Octavian needed to be encouraged and, above all, kept away from Antonius.¹⁴³ Nonetheless, Cicero's loyalty was clearly bound to Octavian long before he delivered the first *Philippic*. Indeed, Cicero's new confidence in his own leadership role after September 44 was due in large part to his confidence in Octavian's loyalty.

Octavian arrived in Rome in May 44 intent on claiming his inheritance. Antonius, who was in possession of all of the money from Caesar's legacy, was dismissive, confident that he was dealing with a mere nuisance, someone of no consequence to himself. However, confident in the people's affection for his father, Octavian soon made it clear that he, Caesar's heir, had been disrespected. He decided to use whatever resources he possessed to fulfill the legacy in Caesar's will leaving money to the people. Caesar's estate included lands that Octavian proceeded to sell in order to come up with those funds and distribute them. The people saw the effort he was making and the lack of assistance he was getting from Antonius and his cohorts.¹⁴⁴ In addition, it now appeared that the money came from Octavian personally rather than Caesar's bequest.¹⁴⁵ Antonius was well aware of how Octavian's public activities were designed to hurt his reputation.¹⁴⁶

But Antonius himself was doing an excellent job of injuring his own reputation at Rome. He had surrounded himself with armed men and then, in June 44, held a secret armed and guarded meeting in which he changed the assignments of provinces that

¹⁴³ *Att.* 15.12.2.6ff.

¹⁴⁴ Frisch 88, 113.

¹⁴⁵ Frisch 113.

¹⁴⁶ Frisch 88.

had been confirmed back in March.¹⁴⁷ This move would especially affect Decimus Brutus who was to be replaced in Cisalpine Gaul and moved to Macedonia without his troops, which would be added to Antonius' when he arrived in the province¹⁴⁸. In late April, Cicero revealed Atticus' awareness of the inside machinations at Rome. Cicero had learned from Atticus about Antonius' plans to hold a meeting on the Kalends of June to effect the provincial reassignments.¹⁴⁹ On May 24, Cicero, in referring to Antonius' upcoming meeting, said that his action could incite war if Brutus were deprived of his province. And on that date, Cicero stated that he personally did not want war.¹⁵⁰

With some of his newly acquired funds, Octavian decided to give games in honor of Caesar. In late July, he put together the ten-day *Ludi Victoriae Caesaris* which also honored the goddess, Venus Genetrix, Caesar's ancestor. According to Appian and other Roman historians, a comet appeared nightly in the sky above the games until it disappeared on the last night. To the superstitious Romans this was a sign of Caesar's divinity and the clever Octavian immediately capitalized on its significance by placing a star above the heads of all of Caesar's statues in Rome.¹⁵¹ Octavian had cut deeply into Antonius' popularity and had won the people's trust and affection.

This widespread popularity influenced Octavian to become a candidate for tribune of the plebs. Antonius could not permit this to happen and violently disrupted the elections that had already begun. He also forbade Octavian from speaking in

¹⁴⁷ Frisch 96.

¹⁴⁸ Huzar 91.

¹⁴⁹ *Att* 14.14.4.

¹⁵⁰ *Att*.15.4.1.9.

¹⁵¹ Syme 117.

public.¹⁵² It was clear that these two men could not co-exist within the Roman government.

Octavian realized that he was on his own and had to use his name and money to get an army, Republican allies and legitimate backing.¹⁵³ Antonius was the true soldier and the loyalty of Caesar's troops had immediately shifted to him after Caesar's death. However, the army had been outraged by Caesar's murder and, according to Appian,¹⁵⁴ blamed Antonius for not having immediately avenged the crime. They indicated that they would be willing to avenge the crime themselves if they could find someone to lead them. Therefore, Octavian's need for an army coincided beautifully with the army's willingness to shift its loyalty in honor of Caesar.

Octavian and Decimus Brutus both had the money and influence to gather their own troops, Brutus in Gaul and Octavian in Italy. Antonius and Octavian were now in competition for Caesar's men.¹⁵⁵ Octavian had already met with Caesar's troops on his arrival at Brundisium, which was a public declaration that he was more than Caesar's personal heir but intended to wield political power as well. Octavian clearly understood that Antonius' March 17 compromise had not taken the army into consideration.¹⁵⁶ He offered five hundred denarii to each soldier who joined him. Antonius, unaware of Octavian's offer but knowing that he had to seduce the men to stay loyal to him, offered only one hundred. The result was open mutiny among Antonius' troops which he dealt with by slaughtering many of them in the presence of his wife, Fulvia.¹⁵⁷ Everitt believes

¹⁵² Frisch 113.

¹⁵³ Syme 122.

¹⁵⁴ App., *B. Civ.* 3.12, 3.32.

¹⁵⁵ Frisch 146.

¹⁵⁶ Everitt 280.

¹⁵⁷ Frisch 146.

that it was Octavian's popularity with the army and, especially, with the people that ultimately pushed him to detach himself from close relations with the Senate and set out to overthrow Decimus Brutus in Gaul.¹⁵⁸

The soldiers unsuccessfully tried to reconcile Antonius and Octavian before a complete rift was effected.¹⁵⁹ However, it would never have been to Cicero's or the Senate's benefit for the two men to become true allies since that would clearly negate anything gained from the Ides of March. Cicero became aware of Octavian's active recruitment and was in favor of it because, by this time, he had come to view Antonius as dangerous and desirous of tyrannical power. Octavian had started to court Cicero, urging him to join his revolt against Antonius and come to Rome.¹⁶⁰ According to Boissier, there were originally three books of correspondence between Octavian and Cicero.¹⁶¹ Boissier emphasizes that Cicero had never approached Octavian to help the Republic. It had been Octavian who had come to him and he apparently wrote to Cicero every day, even calling him "father."¹⁶² Octavian needed Cicero's help in his mission to overthrow Antonius, who was clearly and legally the highest official in Rome. Cicero did not realize that the underlying motive for all of Octavian's actions was his desire to ultimately avenge Caesar's assassination by using the Republicans, and then betraying them.¹⁶³ Cicero was not ready to return to Rome. He headed for Arpinum, content in his belief that Octavian would cause trouble for Antonius and weaken him.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁸ Everitt 282.

¹⁵⁹ Syme 125; Huzar 100.

¹⁶⁰ Frisch 148; Syme 142.

¹⁶¹ Boissier 360.

¹⁶² Plut., *Cic.* 45.

¹⁶³ Syme 122.

¹⁶⁴ Mitchell 304.

According to Appian, the Senate did not trust Octavian because of his money and soldiers, wisely believing that he would not be content as a private citizen.¹⁶⁵ In the late autumn, Octavian wanted the Senate to legitimize his actions in behalf of the Republic. He claimed to be freeing Rome from Antonius' tyranny. He made an anti-Republican speech in which he demanded his father's honors and status. Before the Senate could act on his demands, he learned that Antonius' army was approaching Rome. The soldiers, realizing that Octavian wanted to fight Antonius rather than avenge Caesar's murder, would not fight the opposing legions. Octavian lost the loyalty of many of his soldiers at that time.¹⁶⁶ Prior to this stand, Cicero had received a letter from Octavian offering him leadership in the Republican cause against Antonius.¹⁶⁷

CICERO AND ANTONIUS: AN ENMITY WITHOUT A CAUSE?

Antonius is the most pivotal character in the analysis of what overcame and motivated Cicero to embark on the road to the *Philippics* in which he vehemently opposed and attacked him. Cicero's life experiences and decisions certainly shaped the man who reappeared to energetically guide the Republic to its ultimate doom. Yet it is the figure of Antonius that seemed to have been the red flag to Cicero's bull. Mitchell and Syme are diametrically opposed in their opinion of the relationship between the two men. Syme insists that there was "no ancient grudge" between them. In fact, there was what could have been called a friendship.¹⁶⁸ On the other hand, Mitchell asserts that there never was a friendship. Cicero had always despised Antonius and found his

¹⁶⁵ App. *B.Civ.* 3.21.

¹⁶⁶ Everitt 293.

¹⁶⁷ Everitt 291.

¹⁶⁸ Syme 140.

lifestyle abhorrent and morally disgraceful.¹⁶⁹ Therefore, it is essential to examine how far any history between them might have driven Cicero to what could be viewed as fanaticism.

Antonius' stepfather, Publius Cornelius Lentulus Sura, was the chief conspirator along with Catiline at the time of Cicero's consulship. He was executed in the Tullianum, and it is said that Cicero personally escorted him there.¹⁷⁰ The constitutionality of that execution was always in question. However, for Antonius, there was more involved on a personal level. As stated earlier, there is some question as to whether Antonius himself was a Catilinarian sympathizer. Even were he not, the execution of Lentulus was certainly a family tragedy. Huzar states that Antonius' relationship to Lentulus could have engendered bitterness towards Cicero. In addition, it may even have sparked the friendship of Caesar and Antonius.¹⁷¹ Cicero probably believed that Antonius and some of his friends were on the sidelines of the Catilinarian conspiracy. Therefore, Cicero may have resented Antonius for years prior to any personal confrontations with him.

Cicero may also have been aware that Antonius had taken part in the destruction of his and his brother Quintus' property. It makes perfect sense that Antonius, because of his close friendship with Clodius and a need to avenge what he deemed his stepfather's unlawful execution, would have gladly participated in this destructive mischief.

¹⁶⁹ Mitchell 296

¹⁷⁰ Huzar, 19-20.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

The friendship between Antony and Clodius, however, came to a bad end in the Forum one day after a riot that had probably been incited by Clodius and his cohorts. Antonius attacked Clodius with a sword, which caused a permanent rift between them.¹⁷² After the tussle, Antonius announced that he had felt obligated to avenge Clodius' spiteful attacks on Cicero. Huzar thinks that Antonius' statement would have greatly amused many in Rome. However, there are other likely scenarios for the conflict. At the time, Caesar was very powerful and Antonius was trying to curry favor with him. Clodius had been Caesar's man, but he was becoming unmanageable.¹⁷³ Antonius may have seen him as a rival for status in Caesar's entourage and, therefore, used an excuse to weaken him in public. It had also been rumored that Antonius was having an affair with Clodius' wife, Fulvia, who later married Antonius.

It was probably to Cicero's political advantage to behave as if he trusted the sincerity of Antonius' motive, complimenting him as his "noble and gallant friend."¹⁷⁴ Cicero had been a man without a country and needed to find a way to exist comfortably in Rome after his exile. He was probably aware of Antonius' growing closeness to Caesar and was trying to erase any remnants of resentment from 63. However, Antonius' later marriage to the wife of a former enemy could not have sat well with Cicero, especially because Fulvia was known to be a strong woman who exerted tremendous influence on her men.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Huzar 37.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ Huzar 37.

¹⁷⁵ Huzar 70.

Antonius became very useful to Caesar during the civil war with Pompey. On more than one occasion, Caesar left Antonius behind to rule at Rome while he was away. Everyone must have known Cicero's political leanings, but Caesar needed his presence in Rome. Cicero still had tremendous prestige and wielded significant influence in Italy.¹⁷⁶ Caesar had left instructions with Antonius to court Cicero so that he would willingly stay in the country. However, Antonius preferred to carouse and, therefore, never personally approached Cicero. Instead, he wrote him a letter which, though claiming devotion, also contained veiled threats. He emphasized to Cicero that Caesar had always done more for him than Pompey. He then made subtle threats against Cicero's daughter, Tullia, and her husband, Dolabella, after which he ordered Cicero to stay in Italy because it was Caesar's wish.¹⁷⁷

Antonius' behavior was in direct contradiction to what Caesar had commanded and it drove Cicero to Pompey. Cicero apparently blamed Caesar's choice of agents as reason enough not to trust his political aspirations. Huzar judges that Cicero joining Pompey was a "well-deserved blow to Antonius" since he had not fulfilled his responsibility to Caesar.¹⁷⁸

When the civil war was all but over and Caesar had left Rome to pursue Pompey, he again left Antonius in charge, this time for over a year.¹⁷⁹ Again Antonius was proving to be a less than perfect leader. Without Caesar, no elections were held and Antonius' relationship with the current senators, priests and other magistrates had deteriorated. Antonius had also been instructed by Caesar to treat the returning

¹⁷⁶Huzar, 55.

¹⁷⁷Att.10.8A.1.

¹⁷⁸Huzar 56.

¹⁷⁹Huzar 62.

Pompeians with clemency. Instead, Antonius, who probably had been admonished for his earlier failure, was anything but clement. He would not let Cicero return to Italy, unaware that Cicero actually had Caesar's permission to do so. In addition, Antonius, who had not changed his stripes, was still carousing with his actor friends and frequently making a public spectacle of himself.¹⁸⁰

Therefore, under Antonius' less than watchful eye, riots erupted in Rome. Upon his return, Caesar was furious with Antonius and publicly denounced him. Antonius responded brilliantly by apparently sending an assassin after Caesar.¹⁸¹

Cicero must have borne tremendous resentment towards Antonius for his treatment of him during and at the end of the civil war. An incipient grudge was in the making. Indeed, Cicero must have taken a great deal of satisfaction from the rift developing between Caesar and Antonius.

In his third consulship in 46, Caesar promoted Lepidus as co-consul rather than Antonius. Although Antonius had failed Caesar through his own devices and vices, he must have believed that his behavior towards Cicero was one of the seeds of his problems.

At about this time, in 47 or 46, Antonius married Fulvia, a woman whom Cicero considered "cruel and greedy."¹⁸² Many agree that she must have encouraged Antonius to change his lifestyle because, in 44, Caesar finally named Antonius as his co-

¹⁸⁰ Huzar, 65.

¹⁸¹ Huzar 68.

¹⁸² Huzar 70.

consul.¹⁸³ Huzar even states that, under Fulvia's influence, Antonius may have begun to resent Caesar's political career and megalomania.¹⁸⁴

Nonetheless, Antonius had become Caesar's most trusted follower. He was *flamen dialis* of the cult of Caesar and leader of the *Luperci Iulii*.¹⁸⁵ And, of course, it was Antonius, in the semi-nude at the Lupercalia in February, who several times offered Caesar the crown. Although he refused it, "with affected modesty," Caesar was considered complicit in this performance and it ultimately cost him his life.¹⁸⁶

Cicero was in Rome on the Ides of March. He certainly was aware that, after Caesar's assassination, Antonius was Rome's legitimate leader. Antonius wisely appointed Dolabella as his co-consul to avoid any hostilities between himself and Dolabella. Caesar had already officially named Dolabella second-in-command at Rome during his upcoming Parthian campaign. The consul Antonius had originally protested, questioning the legality of the appointment.¹⁸⁷ However, after the assassination, Antonius had made an excellent political decision.

When Antonius had recovered from his initial fear and shock immediately following Caesar's assassination, he initially proved himself to be a very competent consul. Even Cicero praised some of Antonius' early actions, such as the abolition of the dictatorship and strong measures taken against people who were petitioning for divine honors for Caesar. Antonius' clever recall of Pompey's son, Sextus, was a stroke of genius. Appian says this made the Senate trust and praise him.¹⁸⁸ Although the

¹⁸³ Huzar 71.

¹⁸⁴ Huzar 79.

¹⁸⁵ Huzar 76.

¹⁸⁶ App., *B.Civ.* 2.109; Plut., *Ant.* 12.1ff..

¹⁸⁷ Huzar, 69.

¹⁸⁸ App., *B.Civ.* 3.4.

recall of Sextus Cloelius, a henchman of Clodius, was a less than popular move, Antonius did write to Cicero politely requesting his approval of that decision. Obviously, he would have done it anyway but, then at least, Antonius was still seeking the path of least resistance with Cicero as an ally.¹⁸⁹

Frisch and Syme agree that Antonius must be viewed outside the confines of the *Philippics* to avoid being misled by Cicero's interpretation of events and people.¹⁹⁰ Both Huzar and Syme compliment Antonius for his maintaining calm during the days after the assassination. He proved that he was a skilled statesman, demonstrating strength and stability.¹⁹¹ His administration of affairs was far superior to that of Caesar during his first consulship. There seemed to have been much less violence and corruption.¹⁹² Everitt even believes that Antonius had Republican inclinations, viewing Pompey as the model for peaceful supremacy.¹⁹³

From the end of April to early June, Frisch points to three centers of energy at Rome: Antonius, Dolabella and Octavian.¹⁹⁴ During that same period of time and beyond, the absent Cicero, watching affairs from a distance, seemed to be conflicted in his opinions and experiencing mood swings in his growing aggravation with Antonius.¹⁹⁵

Frisch says that Antonius never wanted to clash with the tyrannicides, had great respect for Marcus Brutus and was completely behind a compromise.¹⁹⁶ His subsequent actions seem to negate that conclusion and even suggest that Octavian

¹⁸⁹ Mitchell 202; *Att.* 14.13A.

¹⁹⁰ Frisch 8; Syme 105.

¹⁹¹ Huzar 91; Syme 105.

¹⁹² Syme 108.

¹⁹³ Everitt 273.

¹⁹⁴ Frisch 76.

¹⁹⁵ Frisch 119.

¹⁹⁶ Frisch 8; Syme 106.

might not have been the only dissembler in this drama. However, Syme somewhat concurs with Frisch, asserting that Antonius had no quarrel with the liberators as long as they did not interfere with his ambition to become the undisputed leader of the Caesarian party.¹⁹⁷ As it turned out, it was not the liberators who were in control of the fruition of Antonius' aspirations. The contest for primacy among the Caesarians would ultimately be between Octavian and Antonius.

Antonius' instinct to visit Calpurnia and immediately secure whatever money and documents she had was not, in itself, a nefarious deed. He had inherited the position of leadership in Rome and had to have whatever was necessary for him to effect a smooth transition. Mitchell maintains that Antonius had a fine working relationship with the Senate. The Senate trusted Antonius soon after Caesar's demise with broader powers to publish Caesar's *acta* than Cicero indicated in either *Philippic* 1.3 or 2.91.¹⁹⁸ However, his later use of those papers comes into question, especially since they came with the use of Caesar's secretary, Faberius, in whose hand many of Caesar's *acta* had been written. Antonius was suddenly in possession of what amounted to absolute power and he took full advantage of that position. He granted decrees, spent money frivolously, recalled exiles who would never have been welcomed by Caesar, and registered illegitimate Senate decrees.¹⁹⁹ Naturally Cicero would have become outraged learning of Antonius' alleged misappropriation of Caesar's money and *acta*.

¹⁹⁷ Syme 106.

¹⁹⁸ Mitchell 139.

¹⁹⁹ Frisch 74.

He also might have been disagreeably reminded of Antonius' post-civil war purchase and abuse of the murdered Pompey's confiscated property.²⁰⁰

Huzar's interpretation of Antonius' ambition does not necessarily have to be taken negatively. She states that Antonius needed to secure enough power to protect himself and attain control in order to successfully govern the empire.²⁰¹ Whether Antonius was driven by ambition and powerlust, this was his new and rightful responsibility. Antonius' performance at Caesar's funeral was also in his best interest. In addition to removing the conspirators from Rome, it solidified concord among the *optimates* and underscored the need for the consuls' control of the situation.²⁰²

When Antonius left Rome at the end of April to start new veteran colonies in Italy, he left Dolabella in Rome. Dolabella continued the reconciliation policy that had begun on March 17 and, to prove his sympathy with the Republican cause, took harsh measures against Caesar's partisans. Dolabella's behavior made Cicero extremely happy. He wrote worshipful letters to Atticus and to Dolabella, extolling his former son-in-law to such an extent that Atticus apparently scolded him for going overboard.²⁰³

It was in June that Antonius' actions became overtly suspicious. He called a meeting at which very few senators were present, without the requisite 17-day legal notification. Questionable laws were enacted without auspices being read. This is the meeting about which Atticus had warned Cicero in which the change of provincial management was ratified. In addition, ostensibly to cover their tracks, Dolabella and Antonius appointed themselves members of a commission to investigate Caesar's *acta*.

²⁰⁰ Mitchell 296.

²⁰¹ Huzar 88.

²⁰² Syme 105.

²⁰³ *Att.* 15.15.1 ff.; 14.16.2; 14.17A; 14.19.5.

Perhaps their worst mistake was the passage of a *lex agraria*, a law that could never meet with the approval of the *optimates* in the Senate.²⁰⁴ From June 1st on, Antonius conducted none of his business through the Senate, but went through the people and their tribes.²⁰⁵ Although their actions were viewed by some as tyranny, under the circumstances, the consuls were constitutionally entitled to wide discretionary powers in the face of crises.²⁰⁶ For instance, Syme maintains that Antonius had every right to order Decimus Brutus out of Cisalpine Gaul and reassign provinces to whomever he saw fit.²⁰⁷

As stated earlier, Antonius could never really attain primacy as the Caesarian leader as long as Octavian was in the picture. Octavian was his competitor for the Senate, the plebs and the veterans. The Senate was becoming more hostile to Antonius. While Octavian appeared to be supporting the Republican cause, Antonius dropped any vestiges of a conciliatory pose. Towards the end of Cicero's self-imposed retirement, Antonius appeared to be escalating his violent behavior. He had threatened a tribune at the October 2nd meeting which was protected by an armed guard. He apparently published a pamphlet demanding a trial for Caesar's killers in which he included Cicero as an accomplice. He accused Octavian of trying to have him killed. Cicero believed every negative word he heard about Antonius, especially the news of the assassination attempt. He was becoming blinded by hatred.²⁰⁸ Cicero was in turmoil, trying to decide how to respond. He had not attended a Senate meeting or

²⁰⁴ Frisch 96.

²⁰⁵ Ker 18-19.

²⁰⁶ Syme 108.

²⁰⁷ Syme 162.

²⁰⁸ Lacey 156-157.

been in Rome since March 17th. According to Geweke, Atticus's belief that Cicero could be of genuine help to Brutus in Gaul finally pushed Cicero to return to Rome in August.²⁰⁹

CICERO'S RETURN: WHAT WAS HE THINKING?

From the time he left Rome, Cicero was an eager audience for news regarding the aftermath of Caesar's murder. Once again, he was exhibiting almost constant inconsistency and uncertainty in his opinions about the current political situation and his proper involvement therein. His letters from this period are those of a fascinated, but often horrified, observer who believed he had ultimately made the wrong decision by abandoning Rome after the Ides of March. Cicero had strong opinions about the tyrannicides, stating that the tyrant had died but not the tyranny²¹⁰ and that, perhaps, Antonius should have been executed along with his leader. However, in spite of the fact that Cicero was disappointed in the lack of change in response to Caesar's death and, later, in Antonius' and Dolabella's regime, none of his letters prior to the *Philippics* exhibit the vitriolic hatred he displayed towards Antonius throughout those speeches. In fact, it was not until Cicero had returned to Rome in late August and encountered Antonius' wrath that his own emotions seemed to spin out of control.

In early April, Antonius was a selfish buffoon not worth worrying about.²¹¹ The conspirators were glorious heroes who had restored freedom.²¹² Octavian might have

²⁰⁹ Geweke 477.

²¹⁰ *Att.* 14.9.2.2.

²¹¹ *Att.* 14.3.2.3.

²¹² *Att.* 14.4.2.2.

been expected to attempt a *coup d'état*.²¹³ Yet, only a few days later, on April 12, Antonius and Dolabella had become worrisome unwanted pro-Caesarian leaders, while the action of the tyrannicides, although praised, was proving to be ineffectual. Cicero was appalled by the apathy of the leading citizens in Rome, and pleased to be out of the political arena.²¹⁴ On April 16th, Cicero was pleased that Antonius had won “even Brutus’ approval,”²¹⁵ but by the very next day, the *quasi designati consules* had returned to the roles of tyrants.²¹⁶ While he vacillated and blamed everyone else for either their tyranny or lack of action and involvement, Cicero was entertaining Octavian who was planning to accept his inheritance. Cicero was warily attempting to judge the young man’s character and value.²¹⁷

In the months that followed, Cicero continued to receive news from Rome that assured him that a civil war was in the offing. This only increased his apprehension and indecision.²¹⁸ Decimus Brutus was joining his troops which made neutrality impossible. Therefore, Cicero debated whether to join Brutus or Sextus Pompeius at his respective military camp or to pursue a commissionership in Greece. The Greek post would be another desertion of Rome and, this time, of Italy. For some reason, Cicero believed that Brutus’ decisive move put Cicero’s life in danger were he to remain in Italy. He began to make excuses that his trip to Greece would be for the benefit of his son Marcus. Cicero certainly seemed concerned about his own welfare and survival at this point. Indeed, some aspects of cowardice had entered Cicero’s musings which, under

²¹³ Att. 14.5.3

²¹⁴ Att. 4.6.2.2ff.

²¹⁵ Att. 14.8.1.3.

²¹⁶ Att. 14.9.2.3.

²¹⁷ Att. 14.10.1.4-14; 14.12.2.1

²¹⁸ Att. 14.13.2.1 ff.

the circumstances was not unreasonable. A return to Rome would certainly have embroiled him in something he was as yet unwilling to face.

Cicero admitted to Atticus that he had begun to humor Antonius, since no other attitude would have made a difference and it was the wiser course of action. In fact, in responding to Antonius' letter of April 22 with regard to Sextus Clodius' recall from exile, Cicero displayed an overly obsequious attitude to the consul, even concluding with the promise that he would gladly do whatever was asked or required of him by Antonius.²¹⁹ Then, as discussed earlier, he developed a worshipful attitude towards Dolabella and what, in Greek, he called his *coup*.²²⁰ He continued to ponder where in the world he belonged during this upheaval and uncertainty.

By the beginning of May, Cicero reconsidered leaving Italy for Greece on June 10, having learned that Marcus Brutus, rather than attending the Senate on June 1, was contemplating exile.²²¹ In addition, he had had meetings with Pansa and Hirtius, the chosen consuls for 43, and was unimpressed with them both as men and as prospective leaders. He was now more determined than ever to flee and leave Rome to her inevitable fate under incompetent incoming leadership.²²² At this point in time, Cicero appeared to have reconciled himself to the tyrannicides' impotence, the impending civil war, and his not involving himself in any of it. This might have been the sanest point in Cicero's reaction to the events around him. Atticus had always distanced himself from the politics of Rome and yet remained a respected Roman

²¹⁹ Att. 14.13B.1 ff.

²²⁰ Att. 14.19. 5.2.

²²¹ Att. 14.20.3-4.

²²² Att. 14.22.4.

citizen living abroad. This was a very appropriate decision for a 62 year old man who had no taste for the military and no impetus to fight in the political arena.

Nevertheless, Cicero continued to discuss attending the Senate meeting on the Kalends of June, although he had learned that there could be armed guards, definitely making the conspirators' appearance there a potential mistake or even disaster.²²³ In addition, after a subsequent meeting with Hirtius, Cicero seemed more heartened by Hirtius' attitude since he had apparently made Cicero his *arbiter* during the present crisis and in his subsequent consulship. Cicero was less trusting of Hirtius' co-consul Pansa.²²⁴ Nonetheless, one can almost imagine the light of excitement returning to Cicero's eyes at the prospect of advising a future consul. This position could run a close second to actually holding a second consulship of his own,

At the end of May, Hirtius, like others, was warning Cicero of great danger should the tyrannicides and their sympathizers attend the June 1 meeting. Cicero did not want to antagonize Antonius with his absence which could be taken as a personal offense and viewed as disapproval of the consul's success. Ultimately, Cicero decided that his appearance in Rome would be too dangerous for him. However, he was no longer as positive about leaving the country.²²⁵

Cicero continued to stay in touch with Brutus and Cassius who were insulted by the Asiatic corn commission they had been offered. Appian believed that this position was really a kindness bestowed by upon the two conspirators since it would acknowledge them as upstanding citizens, give them the freedom to travel without the

²²³ Att. 14.22.2-13.

²²⁴ Att. 15.1.2.4-3.9.

²²⁵ Att. 15.7.2.2-3.13.

appearance of flight and remove them from danger at Rome.²²⁶ Nonetheless, Brutus, Cassius, Cicero and Servilia, Brutus' mother, were very unhappy with this prospect and Servilia eventually had it quashed.²²⁷ Cicero managed to get himself appointed to Dolabella's staff, allowing him the freedom to leave Rome and move around as an ally of the current government.²²⁸

After the corn commission was out of the picture, Marcus Brutus decided to leave for Asia, rather than risk living in Rome.²²⁹ Brutus had been Cicero's greatest hope for repairing and running the Republic. Brutus' decision to abandon Rome and Italy had to have been a blow to Cicero, but also confirmation of his own decision to do the same. On June 20, Cicero, reconciled to leaving Rome through Dolabella's good graces, asked Atticus if anyone could seriously view his departure as a governmental duty rather than a desperate solution to an insoluble problem. Perhaps the end of his life would be better because of this move.²³⁰ Yet, in late June, Cicero was still wavering about whether to go forward with his trip, mentioning a July 30th departure.²³¹ In mid-July, Cicero had decided to ask Brutus if they could travel together, especially since his original route through Brundisium seemed to be blocked by incoming troops.²³²

By July 25, Cicero had set forth on the first part of his journey without Brutus, having decided to head for Brundisium, since the soldiers near there seemed to pose less of a threat than the pirates he could encounter on other routes. He bemoaned his

²²⁶ App.B.Civ.3.6.

²²⁷ Att. 15.11.1.1-2.14.

²²⁸ Att. 15.11.4.1 ff.

²²⁹ Att. 15.12.1.7-13.

²³⁰ Att 15.20.1.3-2.10.

²³¹ Att. 15.25.

²³² Att.6.4.4.1-12.

departure from Italy and questioned his own motivation for leaving at that time. He assured Atticus that he would return to Rome by the Kalends of January, 43.²³³

Cicero's next letter is dated August 19. Cicero was just off the coast of Pompeii returning to Italy, having received several pieces of good news. Brutus' and Cassius' farewell edict, wherein they declared no hostile intentions towards Antonius, preferring exile to war, had been delivered. They were seeking a meeting with Antonius in the Senate on the Kalends of September and had invited numerous proconsuls and propraeors to attend as well. They hoped to reach a new compromise that would allow them to return to Rome. Rumor had it that Antonius was amenable to a compromise that included him relinquishing his claim to Cisalpine Gaul and submitting to the Senate's will.²³⁴

Cicero also learned that he was being criticized for his decision to abandon Rome.²³⁵ Apparently, Atticus and Brutus were among those critics, accusing Cicero of abandoning a sinking ship. Cicero insisted to Atticus that he had finalized his decision to travel because of Atticus' encouragement and that they had both agreed that he would return by the beginning of the new year. Brutus, with whom Cicero had proposed to travel, was upset with him for missing the Senate meeting of August 1, which gave the impression that he had permanently deserted his country for pleasures such as the Olympic games.²³⁶ Yet, in spite of his pleasure at being missed and desired, Cicero

²³³ *Att.* 6.6.2.1-11.

²³⁴ *Ker* 17.

²³⁵ *Att.* 16.7.1.1-12.

²³⁶ *Att.* 16.7.5 *ff.*

insisted that he had definitely not returned to participate in politics, in spite of Brutus' recommendation that he do so.²³⁷

Unfortunately, on August 1, at a Senate meeting also requested by Brutus and Cassius wherein they hoped to be released from their praetorial duties but allowed to remain in Rome for the balance of their terms, matters did not proceed as expected. Because the meeting purported to be one of peace and compromise, many consulars attended in the hope that the future was now secure. Instead, L. Calpurnius Piso, Caesar's former father-in-law, delivered a speech in which he verbally attacked Antonius and his leadership.²³⁸ He mistakenly was counting on tremendous support from the returned patriots. However, no one offered any agreement to the sentiments he expressed. Interestingly, neither Brutus nor Cassius were in attendance at that meeting, which may have led Antonius to believe that they knew about and tacitly approved of Piso's outburst. Antonius apparently responded furiously, threatening Brutus and Cassius, whose answering 'manifesto' put an end to all hope of reconciliation among these men and to Cicero's optimistic return.²³⁹

Cicero's next extant communication with Atticus is dated October 24, 44. By this time, the reluctant politician had jumped back into action with a literal vengeance. He and Antonius had locked horns, although not in person. In fact, throughout the period of the *Philippics*, Cicero and Antonius would never clash in person. It is evident that Cicero had protested too much with regard to his re-entry into the political sphere which had tempted him since his desertion of Rome after the Ides of March.

²³⁷ *Att.* 16.7.7.1-7.

²³⁸ *Ker* 17-18.

²³⁹ *Ker* 18.

Between the August 19 and October 24 letters, Cicero had infuriated Antonius by not attending a Senate meeting on September 1, complaining of fatigue from his recent journey. Of course, Cicero was not anxious to jump immediately into open controversy with Antonius, preferring to watch and wait until he had a better handle on Antonius' game plan. Cicero had also learned of Antonius' intention to propose that an extra day of thanksgiving, in honor of the *divus Caesar*, be attached to every public celebration. Cicero considered that proposal to be sacrilegious.²⁴⁰

Antonius threatened to send housebreakers to Cicero's home to tear it down and drag him into the Senate. He also attacked Cicero's character during the Senate debate.²⁴¹ Antonius' response to Cicero's absence on September 1 spurred Cicero into action and instigated his speech of September 2 which came to be known as the first *Philippic*.

In comparison to the speeches that would follow, Cicero held himself in check with regard to his attitude and response to Antonius. He was as concerned with defending his own absence from Rome as he was with attacking and defending himself against Antonius. He reminded the Senate of his involvement in the compromise that immediately following the assassination and praised Antonius for his mature leadership in that time of crisis.²⁴² He reminded the assembly that Antonius had abolished dictatorship from the State and brought forward several decrees that seemed to encourage peace and compromise.²⁴³ He commended Dolabella's punishment of the Caesar-worshipping fake Marius, and stated that, although Dolabella had acted alone,

²⁴⁰ Ker 18.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² *Phil.* 1.2.1-4.

²⁴³ *Phil.* 1.3.7-14.

he knew that Antonius would have enthusiastically sanctioned and supported his colleague's decision.²⁴⁴

From that point on, however, Cicero's attitude shifted. He condemned Antonius' June 1 meeting where predominantly unilateral decisions had been made, not via the Senate, but ostensibly through the people. He noted that the leading citizens were apparently too frightened to attend.²⁴⁵ Cicero then excused his departure from Rome stating that he had believed that the next time he would be needed there was on the Kalends of January when the new regime would take over.²⁴⁶ But then he heard such good news regarding the scheduled September 1 meeting that he could not help but wish to return sooner than planned.²⁴⁷

Cicero met with Brutus during his journey home only to learn that things were no longer amicable with Antonius. He also heard about Piso's speech and, in effect, condemned the assembly for not having had the courage to support him in what, to Cicero, was great glory.²⁴⁸ Had Antonius not attacked Cicero the previous day in his absence, perhaps Cicero might not have become so defensive of himself and supportive of Piso. However, with his next breath he began to refer to the *iniuria* Antonius had inflicted on him the previous day and to defend his absence. He felt pity for the senators who had been forced to pass a decree with reference to Caesar, a man

²⁴⁴ *Phil.* 1.5.1-4.

²⁴⁵ *Phil.* 1.6.1-6.

²⁴⁶ *Phil.* 1.6.11-14.

²⁴⁷ *Phil.* 1.8.5 ff; 1.9.1.

²⁴⁸ *Phil.* 1.10.1 ff.

unworthy of divinity.²⁴⁹ He then offered tremendous gratitude to Piso for the speech he had felt bound to deliver, however unpopular that might be.²⁵⁰

Although muted in tone, the rest of this speech captured through innuendo more than could have been accomplished through accusation. Cicero jokingly alluded to the *acta* that Caesar did not know he had passed.²⁵¹ Men had been recalled from exile by a dead man; citizenship had been granted by this same deceased person to individuals and groups who had not necessarily been favored by Caesar; exemptions had been passed by Caesar *post mortem* to release funds.²⁵² Cicero's beautiful optative with reference to the funds in the Temple of Ops, "*Pecunia utinam ad Opis maneret!*", is a sharp comical aside with the force of a sharpened knife.²⁵³

Yet Cicero proceeded to insist that any criticism brought against Antonius was that of one loyal citizen against the public deeds of another. Therefore, Antonius would be wrong to view Cicero as a personal enemy, and his anger should be tempered by the public nature of the topics discussed. Also, Antonius, who had taken to traveling armed with a personal bodyguard, should only employ his arms in self-defense and not against a citizen merely stating his concern about matters in the republic.²⁵⁴

Cicero then reminded Dolabella of his glorious and patriotic handling of the Marius situation which he should view as his greatest moment. In the same vein, he encouraged Antonius to recall his handling of the meeting in the Temple of Tellus

²⁴⁹ *Phil.* 1.13.1-14.1.

²⁵⁰ *Phil.* 1.15.10.1-3.

²⁵¹ *Phil.* 1.17.2.-6.

²⁵² *Phil.* 1.24.1-4.

²⁵³ *Phil.* 1.17.8-9.

²⁵⁴ *Phil.* 1.27.12-21.

following Caesar's murder and his subsequent actions as his finest hours.²⁵⁵ Therefore, Cicero felt bound to question the motivation for and change in Antonius' actions and goals. He wondered why power and intimidation were more appealing to Antonius than praise and love.²⁵⁶ Cicero continued to exhort Antonius to appreciate how much better it was to be loved than feared.

Although he might have been offended and angry at all of Cicero's previous remarks, the veiled threat that followed must have enraged Antonius. Having delivered his friendly, fatherly praise, advice and subsequent concern for the abrupt change in Antonius' behavior, Cicero then reminded Antonius of Caesar's fate. Caesar could not have been a happy man knowing that at any time someone might have wished him dead with the hearty approval of many. Cicero, in urging Antonius to make the people happy that he had been born, was subtly implying that Antonius was not too far from bringing the same deserved end to his own life.²⁵⁷

Although Antonius' speech in reaction to Cicero's is not extant, the second *Philippic* makes clear its vitriolic content. Antonius had already been angry with Cicero on September 1. However, his carefully composed answer, which took him until September 19 to deliver was a vicious personal attack on Cicero. He ordered Cicero to be present for the September 19 meeting in the Temple of Concord, but the orator did not attend since he had already been threatened with Antonius' enmity after September 2 and he, probably rightfully, feared for his life.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵ *Phil.* 1.31.1-13-1.32.1.

²⁵⁶ *Phil.* 1.33.10-16.

²⁵⁷ *Phil.* 1.35.1-11.

²⁵⁸ Ker 61.

PHILIPPIC II: CICERO EXPOSES HIS NECK AND LOSES HIS HEAD

The second *Philippic*, although brilliant, is the real turning point in Cicero's career. It is also the beginning of the lack of objectivity in Cicero that continued for the duration of his leadership and substantially contributed to the end of the republic. It is particularly interesting that Cicero never delivered this speech in person even though it is written as a timely response to Antonius' diatribe of September 19. Shackleton Bailey refers to it as a "pamphlet in oratorical form supposed to have been delivered in Antony's presence on 19 September."²⁵⁹ Juvenal, in *Satire* 10, refers to this speech as the *divina Philippica*, Cicero's masterpiece. Kingsley Amis' schoolmaster, in *Take A Girl Like You*, found this *Philippic* both boring and filled with "nasty silliness."²⁶⁰

Cicero had taken his time composing and waiting to publish his own vitriolic response to Antonius. Sussman believes that Cicero had two objectives to accomplish in the second *Philippic*: he had to defend his past career, especially in light of Antonius' attack of September 19; he also had to diminish Antonius's right to Caesar's status by "demolishing his motives, methods, character and political career."²⁶¹ Sussman also states that ridiculing an opponent is the most effective way to attack an opponent.²⁶² Another point that Sussman makes is that Antonius, who was an educated Roman, probably was a good speaker and, therefore, further inflamed Cicero who proceeded to attack Antonius' eloquence among his other flaws.²⁶³

²⁵⁹ Shackleton Bailey, *Philippics*, 31.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ Lewis A. Sussman, "Antony as *Miles Gloriosus* in Cicero's Second *Philippic*." *Scholia* 3 (1994) 53.

²⁶² Lewis A. Sussman, "Antony the 'Meretrix Audax.'" *Eranos* 96 (1998) 115.

²⁶³ Sussman, *Miles*, 69.

Nonetheless, where *Philippic I* was a reasonable critique delivered by a very recognizable Cicero, *Philippic II* went too far and Cicero probably knew this. He did not have the courage to face Antonius and deliver it in person in spite of the fact that he actually wanted posterity to believe that he had. We know that it did not make a public appearance until after the October 25 letter to Atticus in which Cicero, from Puteoli, requested Atticus' discretion in publishing it.²⁶⁴

Cicero had not yet assumed the helm of the government nor had he lost hope for the republic.²⁶⁵ In fact, on October 28, Cicero was still referring to Dolabella as a *vir optimus* even though he was still anxiously awaiting Atticus' reaction to *Philippic II*.²⁶⁶ In the first few days of November, Cicero was no more decided about his role in Rome's future than he had been for months. Octavian had been reporting to him about his military success and Cicero was in even more of a quandary as to how to react and where to go.²⁶⁷

On November 5, Cicero was practically giggling with Atticus over some of his jibes in *Philippic II*.²⁶⁸ and, on November 9, he was still seeking Atticus' advice as to where to go: stay at Arpinum, move closer or return to Rome.²⁶⁹ By November 11, Cicero, encouraged by Atticus, was contemplating writing a history and seemed almost lighthearted and relatively unconcerned about Rome.²⁷⁰ In the final letter of the Atticus correspondence dated November 12 from Arpinum, Cicero expressed personal and

²⁶⁴ Att. 15.13.3-4.

²⁶⁵ Att. 5.13.4.13-15.

²⁶⁶ Att. 15.13a.1.1, 3.1.

²⁶⁷ Att. 16.8.17-20.

²⁶⁸ Att. 16.11.1.1.

²⁶⁹ Att. 16.10.2.

²⁷⁰ Att. 16.13a.2.

public disapproval of Dolabella which he planned to share with as many people as possible. However, again Cicero's problem seems more personal than political, as does his reaction to it. He was more caught up with financial issues that concerned Dolabella and Terentia that would force him to come to Rome.²⁷¹ He seemed to be laughing at Octavian's speech glorifying his father, ridiculing the young man's reported melodramatic physical gesticulations. He was almost dismissive about Octavian's successes, adding that he had not yet come to trust him and that he did not believe that Octavian would have any true value to the republic or himself until after the Kalends of January.²⁷² He then reiterated to Atticus that his major current concerns were financial, not political.

Therefore, almost two months after Antonius' verbal attack on him, Cicero was still seeking vengeance for his hurt ego. His firm decision to go forward with the publication of *Philippic II* was like that of a vindictive child. Sussman is certainly correct in his analysis of Cicero's goals for *Philippic II*. However, Cicero's motivation for continuing to feel the need to publicize his own diatribe rather than working for a peaceful resolution, which had always been his wont, is the issue here and the crux of Cicero's downfall.

It is difficult to believe that Cicero continued to feel justified publishing this personal attack on Antonius after he had had a chance to re-read and edit it. He had obviously lost perspective and needed to publicly lick his wounds with a full frontal attack, although he claimed not to have lost sight of who Antonius was and how much

²⁷¹ *Att.* 16.15.1 ff.

²⁷² *Att.* 16.15.3.

power he wielded.²⁷³ Cicero simply could not recover from the accusations and insults Antonius had levied against him: Cicero was ungrateful to Antonius for having saved his life back in 48; Cicero had shown no gratitude towards Caesar for having granted him amnesty after Cicero had supported Pompey; and, especially, that Cicero was involved in the planning and implementation of Caesar's assassination.²⁷⁴ In any event, it seems foolhardy to have decided to solidify an enmity with the most powerful man in Rome.

Once *Philippic II* had been published, Antonius would have had no choice but to consider Cicero a mortal enemy. It is written as if being delivered in person in the presence of both Antonius and the Senate. In this second *Philippic*, Cicero responded to Antonius' charges of ingratitude by pointing out how grateful Antonius should have been for the mild tenor and impersonal nature of his previous speech, which had been a *beneficium* granted by Cicero.²⁷⁵ Instead, Antonius had chosen to respond with a personal attack that now begged to be answered in kind with all pretense of *beneficium* removed.

Cicero quickly dispelled the need for respecting Antonius as a consul since, in Cicero's estimation, his lifestyle and ruling methods did not merit it, nor had he earned the title legally. In addition, Antonius' attack had belittled Cicero's status as a consular, especially by bringing up the controversy and events following the Catilinarian

²⁷³ *Phil.*2.10.10-14.

²⁷⁴ Huzar 98.

²⁷⁵ *Phil.*2.7.5-6.

executions during and after Cicero's consulship.²⁷⁶ Therefore, Cicero launched into a defense of his actions, reminding the Senate that he had acted with its approval. He added that Antonius' beloved stepfather had been a leader among the conspirators.²⁷⁷

Unfortunately, the Catilinarian conspiracy was not the only incident in Cicero's past that Antonius attacked. He had done a perfect job of putting Cicero squarely on the defensive. Antonius implied that Cicero had encouraged the murder of Clodius, which was borne out by his subsequent defense of Milo. Cicero reminded the Senate that, years before, Antonius had attacked Clodius in the Forum and might have killed him had Clodius not barricaded himself inside a bookstore. In addition, no one but Antonius who was caught up in the present circumstances had ever accused Cicero of complicity in that deed before.²⁷⁸

Antonius' next alleged exaggeration of history was to accuse Cicero of causing the breach between Caesar and Pompey and, therefore, the resultant civil war.²⁷⁹ Cicero rebutted by stating that it was Caesar who had attempted to sever the friendship of Cicero and Pompey.²⁸⁰ Indeed, Cicero had always urged peace and reconciliation between the two men and, had he succeeded, Antonius would never have attained his current status.²⁸¹

In his determination to vilify Cicero, Antonius also made him the originator of the plot to assassinate Caesar. Cicero immediately turned the tables on Antonius by taking the false accusation as a compliment, especially since not one of the conspirators had

²⁷⁶ *Phil.* 2.10.13-17.

²⁷⁷ *Phil.* 2.11.4-6; 2.14.4-6.

²⁷⁸ *Phil.* 2.20.17-21.1 ff.

²⁷⁹ *Phil.* 2.23.-5.

²⁸⁰ *Phil.* 2.24.4-5.

²⁸¹ *Phil.* 2.24.9-13.

tried to conceal his involvement in that deed.²⁸² In fact, some men who had not participated had boasted that they were part of the liberation. Cicero went on to modestly assert that it would diminish their patriotism and deserved glory to take credit for having advised such great men.²⁸³ He then began to underscore the instances of Antonius' stupidity. He believed that Brutus' invoking Cicero's name immediately following the murder proved Cicero's guilt. He did not understand that everyone who considered himself a patriot and approved of the tyrannicides' action was equally guilty and equally triumphant. Antonius' *stupor* was particularly evident when he declared his respect for Brutus in the same breath that he accused Cicero of being an accomplice. He obviously could not make up his mind as to whether the perpetrators were assassins or avengers of liberty.²⁸⁴

Cicero had placed himself in the perfect position to make a fool of Antonius and negate his alleged enmity and hatred for the liberators. If Antonius believed the conspirators to have been parricides, why had he always spoken of and treated them with respect? He had permitted Marcus Brutus to leave Rome for more than ten days, which violated a statute. He had allowed the Apollinarian Games, which ostensibly honored Brutus, to be held. He had assigned provinces to Brutus and Cassius and had bestowed upon them all of the requisite provisions and men. In order to have done these things, Antonius must have viewed these men as saviors, not murderers, and therefore worthy of rewards.²⁸⁵ If Antonius could judge these men to be heroes, why

²⁸² *Phil.*2.25.1-7..

²⁸³ *Phil.*2.27.14-17.

²⁸⁴ *Phil.*2.30.1 ff.

²⁸⁵ *Phil.*2.31.1 ff.

would Cicero have to fear being counted among them? Thus, Cicero expressed his gratitude to Antonius for granting him such renown.²⁸⁶

Prior to and during these defensive arguments, Cicero had elevated his own character and career and had continued to denigrate Antonius'. In an unremitting barrage of insults regarding Antonius' wit and eloquence, Cicero managed to score many other points. Antonius' lust, immoral behavior and unsavory friends, such as the actress Cytheris and her entourage, were fair game.²⁸⁷ However, as blunt and cruel as Cicero had intended to be up to that point, it was not until he brought up Antonius' survival on the Ides of March that the line in the sand was deeply drawn.

Now that Cicero had made it an approved heroic position to support the conspirators, he began to tell Antonius how he would have written the scene. First, he reminded Antonius that it was common knowledge that he had once been approached by Trebonius to take part in Caesar's assassination. Therefore, Antonius could be viewed as complicit himself in the conspiracy since he had both never informed Caesar about it and had been drawn aside by that conspirator outside the meeting prior to the murder. In addition, it was Antonius who had reaped all of the rewards since Caesar's death. He had emptied the coffers of the Temple of Ops for his own personal gain. He had also confiscated all of Caesar's documents and had used them to his own advantage and had freed himself from debt. Cicero claimed that he was not accusing Antonius of killing Caesar, but that he certainly had to currently be in the company of men who heartily approved it. In Cicero's scenario, however, Antonius would never

²⁸⁶ *Phil.*33.1-3.

²⁸⁷ *Phil.*2.20.3-5.

have gotten these opportunities since there would have been two homicides that day, omitting Trebonius' intercession.²⁸⁸

Although many other accusations and defenses followed this portion of the speech, Antonius could have stopped reading right there and have become incensed enough never to have forgiven Cicero. Had this speech been delivered in public, this could have been the point at which Antonius would have jumped up and attacked Cicero. Cicero had accused him of conspiracy, dishonesty, theft, corrupt ambition and, ultimately, in regretting the fact that Antonius had not been assassinated, had called for his death. However, literally adding insult to injury, Cicero continued with this personal assault.

Antonius had somehow become the heir of men he had never known.²⁸⁹ Cicero addressed him as "*homo amentissime*."²⁹⁰ Cicero claimed that he would never want for ammunition against Antonius because there could be no end to his vices and wrongdoings.²⁹¹ Huzar states that this *Philippic* contained "unsubstantiated irrelevant emotional charge against Antonius' public and private life."²⁹² Antonius had been a homosexual prostitute.²⁹³ He had been in collusion with Clodius during the latter's tribuneship and had conspired with him in the destruction of Cicero's life and, later, his property.²⁹⁴ He had come to Brundisium and, rather than paying a personal visit to Cicero, had sent an insulting letter and continued to carouse with his actress and

²⁸⁸ *Phil.*2.34.1 ff.

²⁸⁹ *Phil.*2.40.5 ff.

²⁹⁰ *Phil.*2.42.4.

²⁹¹ *Phil.*2.13-16.

²⁹² Huzar 99.

²⁹³ *Phil.*2.44.8-9.

²⁹⁴ *Phil.*2.45.1-3.

friends.²⁹⁵ He had purchased and abused Pompey's home, a despicable act in the eyes of the Roman people.²⁹⁶ He had then, in response to being ordered to pay his debts, sent an assassin after Caesar.²⁹⁷ And much worse, he had declared friendship for Cicero and betrayed it. In addition, unlike Cicero who had been named *pater patriae*, Antonius had been declared an enemy of the state during his tribuneship when he vetoed the motion that Caesar disband his army.²⁹⁸ Therefore, Antonius had provided the pretext for Caesar to cross the Rubicon, an act which precipitated a catastrophic civil war. In Cicero's eyes, the blood spilled in that struggle was on the hands of Antonius. Antonius was Rome's Helen of Troy, the cause of the state's ruin and destruction.²⁹⁹ And, finally, Antonius had premeditatedly caused Caesar's assassination by offering him the crown at the *Lupercalia*. He had brought the crown with him and deliberately tested the feelings of the Roman people and raised the suspicions.³⁰⁰ Caesar, who had rejected the diadem, had been killed; Antonius, who had offered the crown, was still alive and had claimed that monarchical power for himself. Then, when Caesar was out of the picture, Antonius, although supposedly espousing compromise, orchestrated the ruin of the tyrannicides with his oration at Caesar's funeral, thereby inciting the wrath of the common people.³⁰¹ Within days, Antonius himself was completely out of personal debt.³⁰²

²⁹⁵ *Phil.*2.61.1 ff.

²⁹⁶ *Phil.*2.17-22.

²⁹⁷ *Phil.*2.4-7.

²⁹⁸ *Phil.*2.51.12-13.

²⁹⁹ *Phil.*2.55.9-11.

³⁰⁰ *Phil.*2.85 ff.

³⁰¹ *Phil.*2.91.1-4.

³⁰² *Phil.*2.93.4-7.

Cicero clearly wanted people reading this speech to believe that he had delivered it in person. He demanded to know why Antonius had come to hear the speech with guards bearing swords in their hands. He wanted to know why the Temple of Concord's doors were closed when Antonius' Rome was clearly at war.³⁰³ In conclusion, Cicero once again threatened Antonius' life by reminding him that the Roman people now knew how wonderful it felt to rid themselves of a tyrant. Cicero declared that he did not fear Antonius and was willing to forfeit his own life if it would guarantee Rome's liberty.³⁰⁴

In late November 44, Antonius returned to Rome with the intention of declaring Octavian a public enemy. However, he received word that a large number of men had committed themselves to Octavian and, alarmed, he left Rome. It is at about this time that Cicero published *Philippic II*. Since Cicero had not delivered the speech in person, his timing for its publication was excellent. He had not been able to ride the wave of emotions by responding in person to Antonius. Therefore, Antonius' return to Rome in November which included drunken behavior, threats and, finally, flight seemed to offer the perfect opportunity for Cicero to arouse the people's negative feelings towards Antonius. Soon thereafter, Antonius proceeded against Decimus Brutus in Gaul.³⁰⁵

On December 20, the Senate was called together by the tribunes ostensibly to discuss the incoming consuls on the Kalends of January 43. However, Decimus Brutus had let the Senate know that he intended to keep Cisalpine Gaul which prompted Cicero to attend the meeting and deliver the third *Philippic* in defense of D. Brutus' claim to that province. The promise of Cicero's appearance apparently drew full attendance.

³⁰³ *Phil.*2.112.3-6.

³⁰⁴ *Phil.*2.117.7-9; 2.118.8-12.

³⁰⁵ Ker 186-187.

It was during this speech that Cicero first declared Octavian to be Rome's savior against Antonius and reiterated his lack of regard for Antonius as consul. Decimus Brutus and Octavian were now Rome's champions and clearly, to Cicero, Antonius was the enemy.³⁰⁶

THE THIRD PHILIPPIC AND BEYOND: DISASTER FOR CICERO AND ROME

As misguided a decision as the publication of the second *Philippic* was, the sentiments and beliefs expressed by Cicero in the third *Philippic* were truly dangerous. However, Cicero told Trebonius that he believed the third *Philippic* to be the true beginning of his efforts to return liberty to the Roman people.³⁰⁷ It was true that Rome's government was in flux and there was great uncertainty about its future and its rightful leaders. Nevertheless, if Cicero and others were able to accept Hirtius and Pansa, who had been appointed by Caesar as consuls for 43, as rightful successors to those positions, then it seems that they were also obligated to recognize Antonius as their consul for the year 44. Cicero's history with Antonius and the personal umbrage he took from Antonius' insulting remarks cost him objectivity and made him a hypocrite. At the very time that Cicero was advocating overlooking the laws, he was writing *De Officiis* in an effort to teach his son how to be a better citizen. He knew that it would not be in Rome's interest, from his point of view, for Antonius and Octavian to ever join forces. That would end forever Cicero's personal hope that Marcus Brutus would lead the republicans and be a buffer between Octavian and Antonius.³⁰⁸ Cicero had

³⁰⁶ Ker 187-188.

³⁰⁷ Ker 188; *Fam.* 10.28.

³⁰⁸ Mitchell 305.

obviously been swayed by Octavian's charm and flattery, so that he was willing to overlook the fact that Octavian had raised an army on his own without the sanction of the Senate. Also, possibly because he believed that he and Octavian could one day be co-consuls or that he could be the young man's advisor, Cicero had clearly decided to favor Octavian in any conflicts and support him as Rome's only hope for survival.

In any event, the Cicero of 63 would have considered the man he had become in 44-43 guilty of crimes similar to those of Catiline's conspirators.³⁰⁹ He had favored the assassination of Caesar which, in itself, was considered treasonous by some. However, his complete dismissal of Antonius as consul and his ability to defy Antonius' edicts, especially with regard to the assignment of provinces, was less defensible. In his mind, Cicero appeared to have painted Antonius as pure evil and any actions brought against him, legal or not, could be considered patriotic. Also, in a state sorely lacking in leadership, with only seventeen consulars in the Senate, Cicero ran into little opposition to his agenda.

Rome was in turmoil, Cicero's hatred of Antonius and affection for Octavian spurred him on to assume a leadership position he felt he had always deserved. His ego had not diminished with his years, but any sense of moderation certainly had. He consistently resisted any negotiations with Antonius. Ultimately, he seemed to believe that peace was impossible and that the only solution was not *tumultus*, but *bellum*. This behavior seems to exhibit a lack of reason in Cicero who, goaded by personal hatred, was no longer capable of making decisions based on objectivity and wise deliberation.

³⁰⁹ Syme 147.

His goal was the utter obliteration of Antonius and he had assumed the role of puppetmaster in control of all the requisite strings.

It is surprising that none of the lead conspirators ever returned to Rome to add their voices to Cicero's. With Antonius out of Rome and with Cicero leading the Senate, they could have helped Rome's anti-Caesarian cause. Instead, they all stayed out of Italy, with Marcus Brutus criticizing Cicero's advocacy of Octavian to Atticus.³¹⁰ It would be interesting to trace their actions and attitudes while Cicero was flying solo in Rome, especially with an emphasis on whether or not they noted any serious behavioral changes in Cicero.

The *Philippics* became an ever-escalating, frequently irrational, tantrum for Cicero. The Senate was impressed with his consular status and his willingness to take the reins, believing him to be the same man they had trusted and followed in the past. In spite of his willingness to ignore the laws, make enemies of the current consuls, defy consular edicts and aggressively insist on war, Cicero often won the day. However, even when Cicero lost in the first round, as in the sending of the first embassy to Antony, the later negative results only strengthened his resolve and, unfortunately, his vitriol. Thus, although Cicero had begun to question Octavian's loyalty, he continued avidly to support him in the Senate and to push for Antony's utter defeat.

After Mutina, Cicero and the Senate mistakenly believed that Antonius had been completely defeated and was permanently out of the picture. This attitude obviously affected the senators who, showing him no gratitude whatsoever, excluded Octavian and his men from their consideration, basically discarding them. Cicero thought he

³¹⁰ Rawson 289.

could still control Octavian and thus made some attempts to form a coalition with him in the vain hope that he might back the republican cause.³¹¹ The Senate scoffed at this. In addition, they did not put Octavian on the commission to review the legality of Antonius's consulship nor did they include D. Brutus and Octavian on the board of veteran affairs to handle land allotments. Later, they refused to grant Octavian a consulship, a triumph and any reward for his troops.³¹² Octavian knew that his relationship with the Senate and Cicero was over and that he was on his own.³¹³

Even though the Senate was ultimately to blame for Octavian joining forces with Antonius and Lepidus and forming the Third Triumvirate, Cicero had allowed this to happen. Although Cicero denied having said it, Octavian had heard that Cicero had always intended to use him, praise and encourage him, and eventually discard him (*laudandum, ornandum, tollendum*). He believed what he had heard.³¹⁴

From the Ides of March through the last *Philippic*, Cicero seemed to have lost touch with reality. In the end, he had misjudged the potential power of the tyrannicides' action and their ability to repair Rome. Although Octavian's ultimate objective should have been clear to him considering who the young man was and how he had arrived on the scene, Cicero had underestimated Octavian and succumbed to his calculating charm. Cicero's history with Antonius had prejudiced him to the point that he was unable to see the man clearly. He was blinded by Antonius' tendency to debauchery and wild behavior and, therefore, foolishly ignored his innate intelligence and driving ambition. In the cases of both Octavian and Antonius, Cicero neglected to take into

³¹¹ Huzar 113.

³¹² Huzar 113-114; Rawson 287.

³¹³ Frisch 294.

³¹⁴ Everitt 311.

consideration the loyalty of their men and the simple fact that they were the ones who had the troops. Because so much communication from the tyrannicides and others outside Rome came to him personally as if he were head of state, he began to delude himself into believing that he was capable of military as well as political leadership. However, Cicero's Rome was militarily powerless (he had no legions), a fact he seemed to forget.

The last two years of Cicero's life seemed to be a direct parallel of the last two years of the Republic's existence. Both were driven to extreme actions, yet slowly coming apart, fighting for their lives and finally disappearing.

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